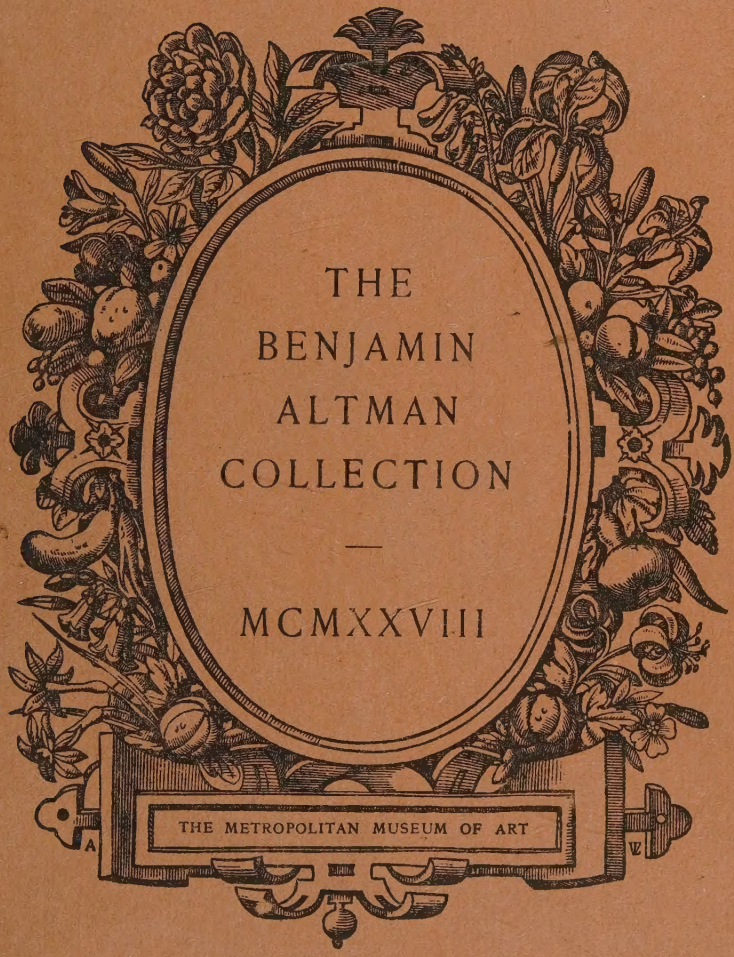
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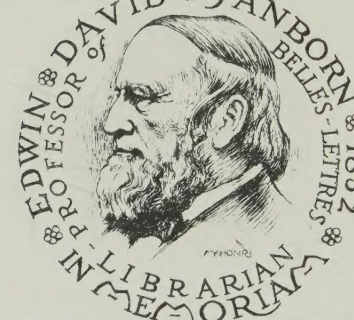

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HANDBOOK
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THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
OF ART

HANDBOOK
OF
THE BENJAMIN ALTMAN COLLECTION

SECOND EDITION

NEW YORK
MCMXXVIII

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Preface

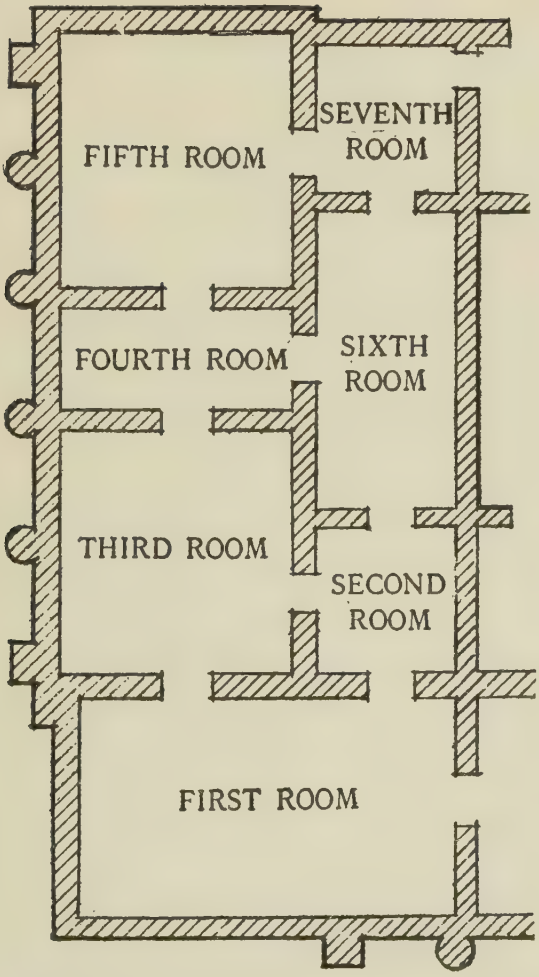
THE removal of the Altman Collection in the spring of 1926 from the galleries occupied temporarily in Wing C to Wing K, where the collection has been permanently installed in larger and more appropriate rooms, has necessitated a new edition of this handbook. The plan of the book has been changed to accord with the new arrangement of the collection. The text has been revised, but remains substantially the same as in the first (1914) and second (1915) editions, in which the paintings were described by Bryson Burroughs, Curator of the Department of Paintings, and the sculptures and other objects by Durr Friedley, at that time Acting Curator of the Department of Decorative Arts, and William M. Milliken, then a staff member of the same department, the latter having contributed the portions relating to crystals and enamels. The installation of the collection was planned and executed by Theodore Y. Hobby, Keeper of the Altman Collection.

The collection was bequeathed to the Museum by Benjamin Altman, who died at his home in New York on the seventh of October, 1913. Whether from a pecuniary or from an educational standpoint, it constitutes one of the greatest gifts ever made by an individual to the Museum, notable alike for the wide

range of interest it embraces and the uniformly high quality of its contents in whatever branch of art they represent.

It was Mr. Altman's ambition to leave to the people of the city with which his success in life had been identified, for their perpetual use and enjoyment, a collection of works of art of the highest possible standard. With this end steadily in view he acquired the treasures through which he became one of the most famous collectors of his day; the intelligence and the energy with which his ambition was fulfilled speak for themselves in the result. It is an assemblage of masterpieces such as a generation ago it would have been thought impossible to bring together in this country, and one which from the nature of its material will be equally attractive to the public and to connoisseurs.

Mr. Altman was born in this city on July 12, 1840. The story of his life is a simple one, and may be briefly summed up as that of an unremitting devotion to business from the time when he was twelve years old until his death. During this long period he allowed himself but three real interruptions to his work. In 1888–89 he made a tour of the world, and his stay in Paris at the end of it being curtailed by a call back to New York, he returned there for several months about a year later. In 1909 he again visited Europe, but the visit was no longer than an ordinary summer vacation. These details are more than usually interesting because they show how slight was his acquaintance with the masterpieces in the great



PLAN OF THE ALTMAN ROOMS

foreign museums; and as he was almost as unfamiliar with the public and private collections of his own country, it is clear that his love for works of art, and his desire to collect them, grew from a native instinct rather than from constant association or a trained knowledge of the subject. He made no pretension to being a connoisseur, but he had to an exceptional degree a flair for fine quality, and it was this which guided his collecting and made his collection what he left it. To be sure, he constantly sought the advice of the experts in whom he had confidence in regard to purchases which he proposed to make, and if they did not approve he would not buy, no matter how much he personally liked the object. Sometimes their disapproval followed an actual purchase, in which case the object in question was heroically withdrawn from what he called specifically his "collection," and either disposed of or placed elsewhere in his house. On the other hand, however, not even an authority in whom he had the utmost confidence could persuade him to buy a thing which he did not himself like, no matter what its importance was represented to be, and thus his collection not only reflected his own taste, but acquired to a large extent the harmony and individuality which he claimed for it, and which made him wish to have it kept together perpetually.

Mr. Altman's career as a collector began in 1882, with the purchase of a pair of Chinese enamel vases, which, for sentimental reasons, he always retained as the beginning of a great undertaking, and which

are now exhibited with the collection, in ROOM 1, CASE C. In the years that followed his tastes varied, and the character of his collection changed accordingly. Chinese porcelains he began to acquire early, and he retained to the last his interest in these, with the wonderful results that we now see. Japanese lacquers were at one period a favorite, but his interest in these was not long maintained. Those that he left were bequeathed to the Museum, but not as a part of the "collection" properly speaking, though they are at present exhibited with it. For a time he purchased American paintings, and though he afterward disposed of these, his interest in American art is shown by his bequest to the National Academy of Design of one hundred thousand dollars to provide a fund for prizes. Then came paintings of the Barbizon school and a few English paintings, all of which were finally ruled out of the collection, and in 1893 he purchased the splendid Renaissance crystals of the Spitzer Collection.

The final stage in his collecting, however, which marked its zenith, began in 1905 with the transference of his residence to his Fifth Avenue house, which was to include his famous gallery. At that time he owned but two Old Masters—Rembrandt's Man with a Steel Gorget and the Yonker Ramp of Frans Hals. It is an amazing fact, and one well worthy of record, that with these exceptions all the paintings now in the collection, as well as all the sculptures and many of the other objects, were acquired by Mr. Altman during the last eight years of his life—

a period during which his business cares and responsibilities were constantly increasing, while at the same time he was handicapped by the illness to which he finally succumbed.

EDWARD ROBINSON, *Director.*

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Chinese Porcelains and Snuff-Bottles

First and Second Rooms

Chinese Porcelains and Snuff-Bottles

First and Second Rooms

ALTHOUGH in the other sections of the Handbook to the Altman Collection the objects are noted in the order in which they are placed in the rooms, the arrangement of the Chinese porcelains in Rooms 1 and 2 has been necessarily governed by the character of the exhibits, which are grouped more with regard to color and effect than to the historical sequence of the pieces. As it is impossible to give a clear idea of such porcelains without considering the chronological development of the art, it has been thought best in the account of this material to disregard the arrangement and to treat the contents of both rooms from the historical standpoint and as one undivided collection. Consequently, instead of leading the visitor in an uninterrupted progression about each gallery in turn, he is referred to different varieties of material and to individual objects in their chronological order by a system of case letters and catalogue numbers. The lettering of cases, which is repeated in each room, begins at the visitor's right as he enters the gallery and is applied first to the wall cases and then to those

on the floor. Numbers are given only to those pieces which receive special mention in the text.

Chinese Porcelains

Introduction

To the Museum display of later Chinese ceramics the Altman Collection added four hundred and twenty-nine examples of porcelain, all pieces of very high order, typifying the best of which Chinese art was capable in its last brilliant period, and illustrating phases of K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung wares only partly represented heretofore. As a result, Chinese ceramic wares are here more fully and finely illustrated than in any other Occidental museum.

Technical Processes

Although everyone is familiar with the appearance of porcelain, its exact constitution is perhaps not so well known, and a brief statement of the nature of the material and the method of manufacture may aid in the appreciation of the vases and jars included in the Altman Collection. In body, Chinese porcelain, like all European imitations of the same ware, is translucent, vitrified pottery, hard as a stone, very white, and infusible save at an exceedingly high temperature. Examined minutely it has the appearance of a natural mineral which is neither glass nor rock, although partaking of the nature of both, a circumstance due to the chemical combination of the two

CYLINDRICAL VASE OF GARNITURE, NOS. 1–5

Famille Noire

K'ANG HSI, 1662–1722

chief and essential elements of which it is compounded, known as kaolin and petuntse, species of clay and decomposed stone, without which no true porcelain has yet been produced.

The first step in the established method of making such porcelain vessels and ornaments as are comprised in the Altman Collection is to reduce these two chief elements, combined with others less essential, to a fine paste, from which the potter shapes the desired object either in a plaster mould or on the revolving table called the potter's wheel. The vase or figure thus made is slowly dried—not baked—after which, if the piece is intended to be other than pure white in color, it is ready to receive its ornament in one of three ways. If the chosen decoration be of blue on a white background, it is almost invariably produced by painting the design in cobalt on the dry surface of the piece, which is then dipped in glaze and placed in the kiln, where it is subjected to the intense heat of the *grand feu*, emerging finished and complete in all essentials, as an example of the large class of porcelain termed "underglaze blue." If, however, the piece is to be practically solid in color, no painting with the brush is necessary, metallic oxides being mixed with the glaze, which under the *grand feu* assumes either widely variegated tints or else plain, deep hues of translucent brilliancy. Sometimes the color in powder form is blown through gauze on to a clear wet glaze and the result is the well-known "powder blue" and other colors with similar faintly mottled texture. Such pieces are classed as "plain

colors" or "monochromes" and usually require no second firing. The third method is used for polychrome enamels, which, being fugitive under the high temperature necessary to vitrify the body of the porcelain, are applied on the white surface of a piece which has been previously glazed and fired. These "enamel" or "overglaze colors" are then fused into the surface of the object by one or more additional firings at a lesser temperature in what is called the "muffle kiln." The Altman Collection embraces examples of all these methods and types. It may be noted here that whichever of these processes is used probably no piece of Chinese porcelain is entirely the work of one man, and that some of the more splendidly decorated specimens are said to pass through the hands of seventy workmen before completion. This may very well be true of a number of vases in the collection.

Historical Note

The use of the basic materials of porcelain was known to the Chinese for many centuries before the secret was discovered by European potters, and native tradition, which has long revered porcelain as a precious and half-magical substance, places the beginning of the art in the remote and legendary past. However, no known fragment of vitrified ware has descended to us from very ancient times and it is not until the beginning of the Sung dynasty in the tenth century of the Christian era that there is tangible proof of the manufacture of any substance

COVERED JAR OF GARNITURE, NOS. 1–5

Famille Noire

K'ANG HSI, 1662–1722

approaching porcelain as we define it. From that period onward through the succeeding Yüan and Ming dynasties the art was constantly in process of development and many remarkable wares of widely varying types were produced, until, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under the last or Ching dynasty, porcelain in China reached a state of excellence admitting of no improvement and marking the culmination of an art which has steadily declined ever since. During this period of nearly ten centuries the chief center of porcelain manufacture has been a single city called Ching-tê-chên, situated in central China near the hills which supply the necessary clays, and at times in the past numbering its inhabitants at more than a million souls, all engaged in tending the flaring kilns which covered the mountainsides in hundreds. A portion of these kilns produced porcelain for the imperial court only and were controlled directly by governors designated by the Son of Heaven to rule the province as well as the city, four of whom, appointed successively during the epoch of the greatest fertility, were potters of remarkable genius and gave their names to numerous inventions which are now recognized as among the most noteworthy in the history of porcelain.

With a few exceptions all the Chinese porcelain in the Altman Collection dates from the era of these four governors and the period of full accomplishment in the art of porcelain manufacture when consummate knowledge of the material and unfailing success

in its manipulation were combined with a vigorous decorative sense and a mastery of the principles of design. This brilliant epoch lasted little more than a century and a quarter, and may be divided into two parts, the first coinciding with the reign of the Emperor K'ang Hsi from 1662 to 1722, and the second with the rule of his successors, Yung Ch'ing, who occupied the throne until 1735, and Ch'ien Lung, who abdicated in 1796, after sixty years of power. All three were princes who through intelligent and unremitting personal interest stimulated the porcelain industry to its most productive phase and their names are indissolubly connected with the art.

The wares of this period were the first to reach Europe in any quantity; for although occasional examples of earlier porcelain had been carried through Persia to Venice and thence to the north, no direct trade with the Far East was possible until the rounding of the Horn opened the seas to Portuguese, Dutch, and English merchants. These soon began to bring back with them from their trading voyages quantities of blue and white porcelain, and later colored ware, which created a great furore in Europe and widely influenced the subsequent development of Occidental decorative art. Delft pottery, Dresden and Sèvres porcelains, and many forms of British ceramics were the direct outcome of attempts to imitate the inimitable Chinese ware, which from the beginning aroused fervid admiration among collectors and was sought after with a persistent devotion. This devotion has increased rather than diminished

COVERED JAR OF GARNITURE, NOS. 1–5

Famille Noire

K'ANG HSI, 1662–1722

ever since, until in our own day the valuation placed on Chinese porcelains of fine quality seems very high indeed, although the statement is often made that in China native collectors pay for representative specimens larger sums even than European buyers.

The earlier importers of porcelain had only vague ideas as to the chronology of the manufacture and were prone to consider pieces older than was actually the case, largely because the innate Chinese reverence for antiquity led the potters to sign most of their ware with a date two or three centuries earlier than could honestly be claimed, in the belief that Western nations would gauge the value of any object according to its age. This is the explanation of the "apocryphal" marks on porcelain whereby one finds pieces stamped with the seal of an emperor who died two or three hundred years before that type of porcelain began to be issued from the kiln. Although the historical information of our china-collecting ancestors was fanciful, they invented for their possessions a useful classification according to ornament and color. Thus among pieces decorated in polychrome certain general classes were established and called by the French terms of *famille verte, famille noire, famille jaune, famille rose,* as green, black, yellow, or rose happened to predominate in their color. "Hawthorn" vases, which may belong to any of the first three groups, were named because of the subject of their decoration and are more fully mentioned below. In referring to the monochromes *sang de bœuf, clair de lune, blanc de Chine, rouge d'or,* and other old French

phrases descriptive of color have been incorporated into every porcelain collector's vocabulary and are heard much more often than their English equivalents. One word, however, came directly from the East into the English language, the term "china" which we now use to apply to all manner of porcelanous wares.

The Collection

First Room

A number of the Altman pieces, in so far as their history can be traced, were brought to Europe shortly after their manufacture and have been known since the eighteenth century. Among these are several specimens in the most outstanding group of the collection, the forty splendid hawthorn vases, which rank both in number and in quality among the finest porcelains in existence. The fact that the main subject of the enameled decoration of these vases is the prunus flower, a blossoming shrub resembling the English hawthorn, gives this type of ware its name, even though the prunus occasionally is omitted from the ornament and is often mingled with other flowers and with birds and insects. The black, yellow, or green backgrounds of these vases are added after the other decorations, and the quality of the color, as well as the freedom with which it is applied, helps in determining the age of the piece. Of the thirty-two specimens with black backgrounds the five pieces, Nos. 1 to 5 in Case H, Room 1, forming a *garniture*

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GODDESS KUAN YIN
Ming Dynasty, 1368–1643

de cheminée or mantle-set, were evidently made early in the reign of K'ang Hsi and are remarkable among a remarkable group for the dignity and simplicity of their form, for their glossy black grounds covered with a film of iridescent green glaze, and for the bold mastery with which the ornament is drawn. Scarcely less splendid in quality and of the same early date are the three vases numbered 6, 7, and 8, in CASE R, ROOM 1, while the other superb black hawthorns in this room show the minor refinements which the next few decades brought to this type of porcelain. No. 9, CASE S, is particularly noteworthy among the later specimens, both for finish and for design. The six hawthorns with yellow backgrounds are of a type even rarer than the black—the central vase, No. 10 in CASE F, being without a duplicate, so far as is known. The monumental example of green hawthorn, No. 11, CASE V, the only specimen of the color in the collection, is unexcelled among porcelains of this variety.

The collection includes twenty-three specimens of famille verte ware in which green against a white background is the predominant color among the variegated enamels of the ornament. CASES J, K, L, Q, and T of ROOM 1 contain most of the examples of this comprehensive species of porcelain. The charming decoration of Nos. 12 and 13, in CASE J, and 14, in CASE Q, indicates the appearance of a hawthorn vase before the colored background is added, but because of the omission here of any tinted ground these vases are classed as famille verte, although the prunus flower appears among the orna-

ment. No. 15, on a pedestal, is interesting in that the subject of the decoration is the "Hundred Antiques," legendary treasures often depicted in Chinese art. No. 16, CASE L, is unusual in having underglaze blue combined with overglaze enamels. The figures in CASE K, on the east wall in ROOM 1, are almost all of the famille verte type, although the large statuette, No. 17, of Kuan Yin, the beneficent Buddhist deity, is one of the few porcelains in the Altman Collection antedating the reign of K'ang Hsi. This and the smaller figure, No. 18, are productions of the end of the sixteenth century, late in the Ming dynasty, and are typical of the more restricted color scheme and bolder conception of form out of which developed the K'ang Hsi specimens grouped about them.

Dating from Ch'ien Lung's time and grouped chiefly in CASES C, D, and E of ROOM 1 are the vases of the famille rose, so called from the characteristic pale crimson or rouge d'or, the most noteworthy color among the enamels. This opaque tint, which is produced by gold, was invented at about the same time that an almost identical color, the *rose Dubarry*, made its appearance in France. Combined with the new enamel are many others not found in the older porcelain, notably a thick opaque white which is often tinted in gradations of rose.

Toward the end of the Ch'ien Lung period the fashion in color underwent a further modification and to the taste of the time for rather raw tints was added a fondness for the use of gold and for a complexity of geometrical ornament. This is partly illustrated,

VASES

Famille Jaune

K'ANG HSI, 1662–1722

and in its most attractive phase, by the egg-shell plates and cups "with seven borders," Nos. 26 to 29 of CASE C in ROOM 1, and in a larger way by the pair of great vases, Nos. 30 and 31, in ROOM 1, which were made to stand at the entrance of the hall of audience in some nobleman's house. They show the heavier quality of the enamels used at this time and the mode of combining a large number of separate tints to suggest a heavily jeweled area. The vase numbered 32 in CASE P, ROOM 1, is representative of the last phase of the eighteenth-century porcelain, when the designer's taste and judgment were less sure than formerly, and his work presaged the complete stagnation which a great art was to suffer for the next hundred years.

The method of ornamenting porcelain in underglaze blue is illustrated by the many specimens of blue and white ware placed in CASES M, N, and O of ROOM 1. These vases are esteemed in proportion to the intensity of the blue used in their decoration; and the deep strong color of Nos. 19 and 20, CASE O, is noteworthy, as is that of the blue hawthorn jar, called a "ginger jar," No. 21, CASE M, which was made to be filled, not with ginger for commercial exportation, but with sweetmeats sent from one friend to another on the New Year. The name originated in the early days of trade with the East when the European importers put their porcelains to uses which the makers had never intended. The decoration of blue and white porcelain is varied in design, the more closely patterned pieces being in a general

way the earlier. Most of those shown here date from the K'ang Hsi period (1662–1722), but, among others, Nos. 22 and 23, Case A, are fine examples of the Ch'ien Lung period (1736–1795). The small box, No. 24, Case B, also of the second part of the eighteenth century, is interesting in having on its cover a representation of the eight trigrams of divination, a symbol of ancient Chinese magic.

With the new Emperor, Yung Ch'ing (1723–1736), the ornament of porcelain became feminized and the old strong colors were replaced by a variety of softer tints. An example of the productions of this reign is No. 25, Case U, Room 1, although as a whole the distinction is not sharply drawn between wares of this transition period and those of the following epoch, when the master potters of the Emperor Ch'ien Lung carried to highest pitch the refinement of structure, surface, and ornament of porcelain.

Second Room

Among the monochrome porcelains, in Room 2, the sang de bœuf or ox-blood reds, Cases C, D, E, and F, will at once attract the visitor by their intense color. Some of these are known as *flambé* from the flame-like variegations which the glaze has assumed in the firing. These gorgeous reds, as well as the apple-green of the vases in Cases I and J, Room 2, are produced from copper, through processes invented by the first of the four famous porcelain governors named Lang, whence the varieties are known as Lang yao or Lang's ware.

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HAWTHORN VASE

Famille Verte

K'ANG HSI, 1662–1722

CASE B, ROOM 2, is remarkable in that it contains no fewer than thirty-four examples of the delicate rosy glaze which in this country is called peach-blow or peach-bloom, but which the Chinese term apple-red or haricot-red. This color, produced from copper, was peculiar to the time of K'ang Hsi and is rarely found on other than the small and restricted shapes represented here. Such ware has long been eagerly sought after, especially in America, but among the collections of peach-blow owned in this country none is known to equal in number or exceed in merit the group included in the Altman bequest.

Among the monochromes, also, a similar preference exists at present for delicate modified hues and smooth, almost smug surface. The little bottles in pearl gray, clair de lune, rose, and magazine blue, shown in CASE G of ROOM 2, illustrate the new tastes for subtle color.

Several of the beautiful all-white vases, which have always been popular since the beginning of Chinese ceramics, and which are usually considered as a single class, with regard rather to quality and color than to chronology, are represented in CASE K, ROOM 2. Among the others No. 33 is typical of the later stage of the porcelain industry, dating from Ch'ien Lung's time. No. 34, with its fine incised ornament, is Yung Ch'ing,while the bottle, No. 35, and the bowl, No. 36, are much more ancient, being specimens of the white porcelain produced in the Sung dynasty, and termed Ting yao from its place of manufacture. The three small libation or wedding cups, Nos. 37,

38, and 39 in CASE K, ROOM 2, it may be noted, together with the figure of Kuan Yin, No. 40, in the same case, were probably made at a factory in the province of Fuchien, which specialized in uncolored ornamental pieces and manufactured much delicate white ware of this type and glaze, known in France as blanc de Chine. All the other pieces in the collection were presumably made at Ching-tê-chên. The graceful bowl, No. 41, is of special interest in that it is one of the famous Yung Lo porcelains which bear incised in the fragile paste the seal of the Emperor of that name who ruled from 1402 to 1424.

A few miscellaneous Chinese objects not porcelain have been placed in these galleries because of their Oriental provenance; among them are a jar in opaque glass, No. 42, CASE L, ROOM 2; a Ming cloisonné vase, No. 43, CASE C, ROOM 1; and two covered jars, Nos. 44 and 45, CASE C, ROOM 1, which are of copper ornamented in painted enamels. Although these last two are late specimens of a genre which never attained conspicuous merit, they are of interest in being the first objects of art which attracted Mr. Altman's attention, and he always regarded them with affection as the nucleus from which his entire collection grew.

Snuff-Bottles

THE Chinese throughout the entire development of their art evinced a fondness for small and precious talismans and toys which they treasured in

PLATE

Famille Verte

K'ANG HSI, 1662–1722

hidden places or often carried about in the folds of their huge sleeves. Such are the early jade amulets and such, from a later age, are the one hundred and seventy-one small snuff-bottles in CASE L of ROOM 2, which rank among the most interesting objects in the Altman Collection, because of the meticulous care which has been lavished on their ornamentation. They were used for scents, cosmetics, and medicines, as well as for snuff, and may be divided according to material into two classes, the one of porcelain, the other of hard stones. The porcelain bottles correspond both in period and type to the larger porcelains in the collection, and examples of most of the varieties of ware made under K'ang Hsi, Yung Ch'ing, and Ch'ien Lung may be found repeated in delicate miniature among the snuff-bottles, although the structure and finish in the small pieces are far finer than in the large specimens.

The hard stones include such precious and semi-precious minerals as sapphire, amethyst, turquoise, jasper, carnelian, agate, sardonyx, chalcedony, lapis-lazuli, crystal, alabaster, and jade. The charm of color in these rare materials, as well as the ingenuity of the lapidaries who have carved from them so interesting a series of subtly varied shapes, brings to mind perhaps more clearly than the more monumental objects the exquisite quality of Chinese civilization in its culminative years.

Paintings of Various Schools

Third Room

Paintings of Various Schools

Third Room

IN ROOM THREE are placed the early pictures of the collection and four seventeenth-century paintings of the Spanish and Flemish schools. The notes begin with the paintings on the north wall at the left of the doorway and follow the arrangement of the pictures around the room toward the left.

I

ULRICH FUGGER

By Hans Maler zu Schwaz

Little is known of this painter. He was from the Austrian Tyrol and was influenced by Strigel, Schaüfelin, and Amberger. Max J. Friedländer, in the Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft, 1895, has made a reconstruction of his work, listing twenty pictures by him, most of which had previously been labeled as of the School of Bernhard Strigel. The earliest of these which is dated is of the year 1519, the latest 1529. Our picture is number fourteen in

Dr. Friedländer's list. On the back of the panel is the following inscription:

DOMINI
MDXXV
ANNO CVRENTE
XXXV
ETATIS

A replica, evidently by the master but without inscription or date, is in the collection of Count Fugger-Babenhausen in Augsburg.

Ulrich Fugger was of the famous and wealthy family of merchants and bankers in Augsburg. Originally linen weavers, they were later interested in mines and in trading in spices and silks in many of the great cities of Europe. Ulrich, the father of the original of our picture, and his two brothers George and Jacob were ennobled by Maximilian, to whom they had made large loans, and the family contributed great sums to the election of Charles V to the imperial throne in 1519. At this time the representatives of the house were Jacob and his two nephews—Ulrich, whose likeness we have, and Hieronymus, both sons of Ulrich the elder. Our picture was painted, as the inscription says, in the thirty-fifth year of the sitter's age, which was also his last, as he was born in 1490 and died in 1525. The portrait shows the features of a shrewd, hard-headed man who did not allow any emotions he might have to interfere with his decisions.

2

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN (CALLED THE ARTIST)

By Antonello da Messina

ABOUT 1430–1479

The debonair young person whom this picture represents was formerly identified as the artist himself; such was its title as far back as 1879 when lent by its owner at that time, Henry Willet, to the Royal Academy Exhibition. The sitter is a pretty and careless young man of about seventeen, seemingly, looking straight at the spectator. But no boy of that age, even in the golden age of the Renaissance when the precocity of artists was so astounding, was capable of the mastery which this work displays.

Modern research places 1430 as the year of the artist's birth and his earliest picture of which the date is known is the Salvator Mundi of the National Gallery, painted in 1465. The suavity and accomplishment of the painting in our picture indicate a very much later time than the Salvator Mundi. Antonello must have been middle-aged at the time of its execution, judging from the known dates.

3

FEDERIGO GONZAGA

By Francia

1448?–1517

Federigo Gonzaga was the son of Gian Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, and the famous Isa-

bella d'Este, the patroness of the great artists of her day. For her Mantegna painted the Parnassus and the Combat between Virtue and the Vices, both now in the Louvre, where also are allegorical paintings by Costa and Perugino, likewise executed at her order for the decoration of the room where she was in the habit of receiving artists and poets. Mantegna's Virgin of Victory in the same museum contains a portrait of Gian Francesco, the kneeling knight whom the Madonna blesses. This was a votive picture, ordered in 1495, commemorating the battle of Fornovo where, as general of the Venetian army, he won a victory over Charles VIII.

But the Marquis afterward changed sides and in 1509, when commanding the imperial forces and the Milanese, he was surprised and taken prisoner by the Venetians at Legnago. He was liberated in 1510 by the influence of the Pope, who demanded, however, that the young prince Federigo, then ten years old, be sent to the papal court as a hostage. This, being agreed to, led to the painting of our picture; for Isabella, having to part with her son, wished to have a portrait of him to keep by her. On his way to Rome the boy passed through Bologna, where his father was at that time, and Lorenzo Costa was asked to execute the portrait. Costa was unable to undertake the commission and so it was given to Francia, who began work, as we find in Isabella's correspondence, on July 29, 1510, and delivered the finished portrait before August 10.

"It is impossible to see a better portrait or a closer

resemblance," Isabella wrote to her agent in Bologna. "I am astonished to find out that in so short a time the artist has been able to execute so perfect a work. One sees that he wishes to show all the perfection of which he is capable." In sending the artist thirty ducats of gold in payment, she asks that he "retouch lightly the hair which is too blond."

Francia's answer is as follows: "The thirty ducats is a munificent gift of your Highness; the trouble we have taken in the doing of the portrait of the Lord Federigo does not deserve such a handsome reward. We remain your grateful servant for life."

The Marquis wished to show the picture to the Pope and at the papal court it fell in some way into the hands of a certain Gian Pietro de Cremona, who tried to appropriate it, but it was eventually returned and Casio, Isabella's agent, wrote, "The portrait has been recovered and I have brought Francia to the house of the most illustrious Lord Federigo and made him compare the two together. Our conclusion was that it could not be better than it is and that it will completely satisfy your ladyship."

It is not pleasant to think that Isabella gave away the likeness of her son, but such seems to have been the fact. The recipient was a gentleman of Ferrara named Zaninello who had done some service for the Marchioness, and to whom she had already sent her own portrait. He writes her, "My lowly dwelling is now exalted, I have become an object of envy and wonder as possessing both Venus and Cupid in my room."

From this time until 1872 the history of the picture is unknown. In that year it turned up at Christie's auction rooms in the collection of Prince Jérôme Bonaparte. In 1902 it was lent by A. W. Leatham to the Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition as A Portrait of a Boy, by Francia, and while there was identified by Herbert Cook as the lost portrait of Federigo Gonzaga.

4

VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ANGELS

By Bernard van Orley

ABOUT 1491 OR 1493–1542

Bernard van Orley was the best known of the Brussels artists of the sixteenth century. It is said that he went to Italy, where he became a friend of Raphael. The productions of his maturity display a strong preference for Italianized compositions and details.

This is a work of his youth, painted, Max J. Friedländer and Hippolyte Fierens-Gevaert believe, in Brussels before 1514. It certainly shows the local influences, that of Massys particularly, and seems to us, perhaps on that account, better than his more ambitious compositions. It is a picture of the Virgin fondling the nude Child by a fountain on the terrace of a palace of strange architecture—debased Gothic combined with fantastic Renaissance. Some Flemish lady of rank cuddling her baby whom she has just bathed, one would say, were

it not for the two little child-angels near by, who sing intently out of an antiphonary laid on a bench in front of them.

The setting is designed to combine all the delights which the artist could imagine as belonging to a noble country residence. The green terrace dotted with wild flowers, on which the figures are placed, is confined by masonry carefully joined with lead and a brick wall coped with stone, where peacocks strut. The fountain, which is of bronze, throws a jet of water into a pool at the left. There is a paved court to the palace and beyond is a Gothic wall. Trees are at the left and in the distance is a precipitous hill with two groups of buildings joined by a drawbridge. Two angelic figures appear in the clouds and a hunter with his dog trudges up the hill.

This picture was sold at Frankfort in 1901 under the name of Dürer to J. Emden of Hamburg, out of whose collection it was bought indirectly by Mr. Altman.

5

A LADY OF RANK AS SAINT JUSTINA OF PADUA

By Bartolomeo Montagna

ABOUT 1450–1523

It was the fashion in the Renaissance for persons of quality to have themselves painted with the attributes of their patron saints. This young lady holds a palm leaf in the right hand and an ugly

short dagger pierces her left breast through the jeweled strip of ornament that edges her green bodice. The palm and dagger are the symbols of Saint Justina, a young Paduan lady who suffered martyrdom in the reign of Maximilian, her bosom pierced with a dagger. The name of the person who posed for our picture must then have been Justina and that is all we know of her except what the portrait tells us about her good looks and her fondness for jewels, pearls particularly. She wears a necklace of pearls, and they appear in the strip of ornament that edges her dark green gown, in the little cap that holds her hair in place, and in clasps for her braid.

The picture is from the Hainauer Collection. The frame is worthy of remark.

6

MARGARET WYATT, LADY LEE

By Hans Holbein the Younger

1497–1543

This portrait dates from about 1539, when Holbein was in the heydey of his success in England, painting all the people of importance at the court of Henry VIII, whose successive queens and candidates for queens were posing for him. In 1538 he went to Brussels to paint the portrait of Christine of Denmark, the widow of the Duke of Milan. The painting (now in the National Gallery) was finished in three hours, said a witness, and "the portrait is perfect." In 1539 the picture of Anne of Cleves, now

6

MARGARET WYATT, LADY LEE

By Hans Holbein the Younger

in the Louvre, decided Henry VIII to make that lady his wife. It was while executing commissions of this prominence that Holbein painted the Lady Lee. The fashion of her dress enables us to date the portrait pretty exactly.

She was the sister of Sir Thomas Wyatt, courtier and writer of poems, a drawing of whom, by Holbein, is in the Royal Collection at Windsor. She had a sister, Mary Wyatt, who attended Queen Anne Boleyn on the scaffold, the Dictionary of National Biography tells us, but it makes no mention of the lady of our picture. The reasons for believing her to be Lady Lee are rather slight; a copy of our picture in the possession of Viscount Dillon at Ditchley, Oxfordshire, is the likeness, it seems, of that lady, according to family traditions. Yet these reasons were sufficient for the compiler of the catalogue of the Exhibition of Early English Portraits at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1909 to label the picture with her name followed by a question mark; and Arthur B. Chamberlain in his book on Holbein speaks of it as being "now identified with some degree of certainty as a portrait of Sir Thomas Wyatt the elder's sister."

Our portrait, painted in her thirty-fourth year, shows her a sharp-faced, rather calculating lady of uncertain temper. She wears a dress of dark brown damask dotted with little golden ornaments like tags. A black velvet bonnet or hood decorated with a band of gold filigree and pearls almost hides her reddish hair. At the breast her dress is clasped

by a red enameled brooch in the shape of a rose, and a gold medallion with a figure of Lucrece hangs from a ribbon at her waist.

The picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1907 and at the Exhibition of Early English Portraits at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1909. It was in the collection of Major Charles Palmer at Dorney Court, Windsor, where, according to the family archives, it remained from the time of King Charles I until late years, and from which it was taken previous to its purchase by Mr. Altman in 1912.

7

MADONNA AND CHILD WITH SAINT ANNE

By Albrecht Dürer

1471–1528

Several other similar compositions by Dürer exist; Gustav Waagen mentions no less than ten, either paintings or drawings, known to him. Of these our example is the most famous. It has a pyramidal arrangement. Saint Anne, with fixed look, her head and chin covered with a white drapery, rests her left hand on the Virgin's shoulder and holds the sleeping Christ Child in her lap. Mary, her head lower than Saint Anne's, with half-closed eyes and joined hands, adores the Child. An exact study for the Saint Anne exists in a fine drawing in Chinese ink on gray paper heightened with white which is in the Albertina at Vienna.

The picture is signed and dated 1519. It comes from the Royal Gallery at Schleissheim near Munich, a country house of the Kings of Bavaria. With a number of other pictures from the same place it was sold at auction in 1852; Joseph Otto Entres of Munich, described as a sculptor and picture dealer, purchased it at that time for the sum of 50 florins. Its low price is explained by the statement that it was covered by a heavy coat of discolored varnish, which gave it a forbidding appearance. It was later bought by Jean de Couriss of Odessa at a price of 46,000 francs and came to Mr. Altman from the collection of Madame de Couriss, who also owned the Filippino Lippi of this collection.

In the middle of the last century this picture was the subject of a discussion between Ernest Förster on one side, who considered it to be undoubtedly an authentic work by Dürer, and Gustav Waagen and Otto Mundler on the other, who questioned this attribution. Moriz Thausing, in his monograph on the artist, reports the arguments (which may be read in full in the Deutsches Kunstblatt for 1854) and judges that those who pronounced against it did not take into due consideration the qualities of Dürer's painting at the period, which, though showing no diminution in force of conception, is marked by a certain impatience in the rendering. They were inclined, he says, to exclude from the master's work the pictures of lessened charm that came from his workshop.

It belongs to a time when the artist was chiefly

concerned with engraving or drawings for engraving. His three masterpieces in this art—the Knight, Death, and the Devil; the Melancholia; and the Saint Jerome in his Cell—were produced a few years before, and in 1519 he was engaged on the great Triumph of Maximilian, the last of a long series of drawings which he made for his imperial patron. Engraving was more profitable than painting. In a letter to Jacob Heller of Frankfort, written in 1509, he says, "I wish from now on to confine myself to my engravings; had I so decided years ago I might now be the richer by a thousand florins."

8

LADY RICH

By Hans Holbein the Younger

1497–1543

Lady Rich was Elizabeth, daughter and heiress to William Jenks, a prosperous grocer of London. Nothing is known of her history except that in 1535 she married Richard Rich, an unscrupulous but successful lawyer, who in 1548 was raised to the peerage and made Lord Chancellor of England, and that she was the mother of ten daughters and three sons whose names have been preserved. She was painted about 1536, shortly after her marriage. There is a beautiful study for this picture in the Windsor Castle Collection, where is also a drawing of her husband, whose portrait Holbein painted, in all probability, though no trace of it exists.

Ralph N. Wornum speaks of this work as a fine, expressive portrait, one of those examples which give us the decided impression that Holbein troubled his sitters as little as possible and worked alone, relying largely on the preliminary drawing and the accuracy of his memory. She wears the English hood of the time and a black dress with a flaring collar fastened with an exquisitely rendered gold medallion, which is decorated with the figures of a man and a woman standing by a dead body. Her face is fat and flabby; in this the painting differs from the preliminary drawing, where the forms as well as the character are more decided and more strongly marked.

In the early seventeenth century this picture was the property of the Right Reverend Herbert Croft, Bishop of Hereford. His granddaughter married into the Mosely family and from about 1700 it was in their possession. It was purchased from Captain H. R. Mosely of Buildwas Park, Shropshire, in 1912.

9

FILIPPO ARCHINTO, ARCHBISHOP OF MILAN

By Titian

1477 (1489?)–1576

Filippo Archinto was born about 1500, or a little earlier, of a well-known Milanese family. After studying and practising as a lawyer, he entered the church and became prominent for his knowledge of canon law under Paul III, with whose policies and

ambitions he identified himself. He was sent by this pope to preside in his name at the Council of Trent, then transferred to Bologna, and he also served for a time as governor of Rome. He did much to further the cause of the Jesuits. From 1554 to 1556 he was sent as a legate to Venice, when Titian may have painted this portrait. His death in 1558 prevented his installation in the archiepiscopal chair of Milan to which Paul IV had nominated him.

He lives in a famous anecdote which is repeated by Bernard Berenson in the catalogue of the John G. Johnson Collection. It seems that when governor of Rome he was called upon to decide who was the father of a certain child. Of the two claimants one was a German and one a Spaniard. Archinto caused food and wine to be brought and bade the child eat and drink. This he did but would drink only water, whereupon the governor told the German that it was no child of his, because, had he German blood in his veins, he would never drink water when wine was within reach.

Archinto died an exile in Bergamo in 1558. Another portrait of him is in America, in the John G. Johnson Collection at Philadelphia. In the painting belonging to Mr. Johnson, which is precisely the same pose line for line, the sitter has not the vigorous aspect which the Altman portrait shows, and there is a peculiar transparent veil over half the picture covering almost all the face, which may refer, says Mr. Berenson in the Johnson catalogue, to the comparative neglect and obscurity in which he re-

10

LUCAS VAN UFFEL

By Anthony van Dyck

garded himself as living in 1556. The Altman picture Mr. Berenson would place two or three years earlier.

10

LUCAS VAN UFFEL

By Anthony van Dyck

1599–1641

Both this picture and the other Van Dyck of the Benjamin Altman Collection date from the time of the artist's visit to Italy, whence he returned in his twenty-seventh year. Gustav Waagen saw the Lucas van Uffel at Stafford House, the property of the Duke of Sutherland, and wrote of it in his Treasures of Art in Great Britain as follows: "The portrait of an astronomer or mathematician in dark, furred mantle. The manner in which the figure has risen from the chair, as if some sudden circumstance had interrupted his studies, gives the portrait all the interest of an historical picture. The price paid for it, £440, is by no means too much." The Duke of Sutherland paid this sum for the work in Paris in 1837.

Lucas van Uffel was a merchant and patron of the arts from Antwerp who lived in Genoa. He was a friend of Van Dyck's, who dedicated to him his etching of Titian and his mistress "in segno d'affectione et inclinatione amereuolo." Another portrait of Van Uffel, painted somewhat later, according to Emil Schaeffer, is in the museum at Brunswick. He was a keen collector of pictures, owning at one time Raphael's Balthazar Castiglione, now

in the Louvre. His collection was sold at Amsterdam in 1639. Rembrandt attended the sale and made a sketch of the Raphael with a marginal note that it fetched 3,500 gulden. This drawing is preserved in the Albertina at Vienna.

II

PHILIP IV OF SPAIN

By Diego Velazquez

1599–1660

According to the records, this picture was purchased by Doña Antonia de Ypeñarrieta from Velazquez in 1624 and was in the possession of her descendants until 1911, when it passed into the hands of Mr. Altman. For about two hundred and twenty-five years it hung in the Palace of Corral and Narros at Zarauz; in the middle of the last century it was removed to the Villahermosa Palace in Madrid.

There is an article by August L. Mayer in Art in America for October, 1913, treating of this picture and its companion piece, the portrait of Philip's minister Olivares, both known on account of their provenance as the "Villahermosa" examples. The story of the discussion of which these pictures have been the subject in late years and the relation which our picture bears to two similar works in American collections, the portrait from R. Bankes' collection at Kingston Lacy, now in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, and the example in the Boston Museum, which was acquired in 1904 in Madrid, are told in this article. Both of these variants are

11

PHILIP IV OF SPAIN

By Velazquez

pronounced by Dr. Mayer to be copies of our painting.

A. de Beruete agreed with this decision finally, though his first opinion was against the authenticity of both the Villahermosa pictures. He speaks of the Philip as "evidently not taken from nature because it lacks that firmness of execution which Velazquez always displayed when working from the living model." He also believed the person portrayed might be the Infante Don Fernando, a younger brother of the king, but all doubts on this head were set aside by the discovery in 1906 by José Ramon Mélida in the archives of the ducal house of Corral and Narros at Zarauz of the autograph receipt by Velazquez dated December 4, 1624, of which the translation reads, "I, Diego Velasquez, painter to his Majesty, declare that I have received from Señor Juan de Cenos 800 realles* in accordance with the specifications of this document which I received through Lope Lucio d'Espinosa, a resident of Burgos, which money I received on account of the three portraits of the King and of the Count of Olivares and of Señor Garciperez, in witness whereof my signature given at Madrid on the 4th of December, 1624. Diego Velasquez."

This precious document passed into the possession of Mr. Altman with the picture and now belongs to the Museum. It definitely disposes of the question of authorship and also dates our picture as before December 4, 1624, when the painter was in his

*Eight hundred reales is the equivalent of about forty dollars.

twenty-sixth year. Both points are of great interest to historians.

12

THE MARCHESA DURAZZO

By Anthony van Dyck

1599–1641

Like the Lucas van Uffel, shown on this same wall, the Marchesa Durazzo is of Van Dyck's so-called Italian period, that is to say, before 1627. It comes from the collection of the Marchese Gropallo at Genoa, and later belonged to Rodolphe Kann in Paris. It is described and illustrated by Wilhelm Bode in the catalogue of the Kann Collection, where it is spoken of as "one of the most sympathetic figures that Van Dyck has painted."

The Durazzi were a noble family of Genoa, who were notable patrons of the arts in Van Dyck's time, commissioning several works of Van Dyck, among others our picture and the celebrated Marchesa Caterina Durazzo with her two children (now in Genoa in the Palazzo Durazzo-Pallavicini), which Jacob Burckhardt considered the most beautiful painting of Van Dyck's Genoese visit.

13

CHRIST AND THE PILGRIMS OF EMMAUS

By Diego Velazquez

1599–1660

Modern authorities agree that this picture is an authentic work by Velazquez dating from his early

time, as early indeed as his nineteenth or twentieth year. The picture shows the attitude of mind of a student interested above all in his power of representing things as they actually appeared to him, and absorbed in the delight of exercising his talent in this direction. The figures are models acting the parts and the accessories are all real. There is no suggestion of the mystical significance of the scene. Its excellence lies in the vigorous modeling and the precise outlines and planes, in the weight and solidity of the things represented, and in the clarity of the craftsmanship. In these qualities the work is pre-eminent.

It is reproduced and described by A. de Beruete in his work on Velazquez, where he speaks of the fact that the heads, hands, and draperies are modeled with great relief and with the care peculiar to the first manner of the artist. The picture has passed through the collections of Señora Cañaveral and Señora Viuda de Garzon in Spain and of Don Manuel de Soto of Zürich.

14

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

By Giorgione

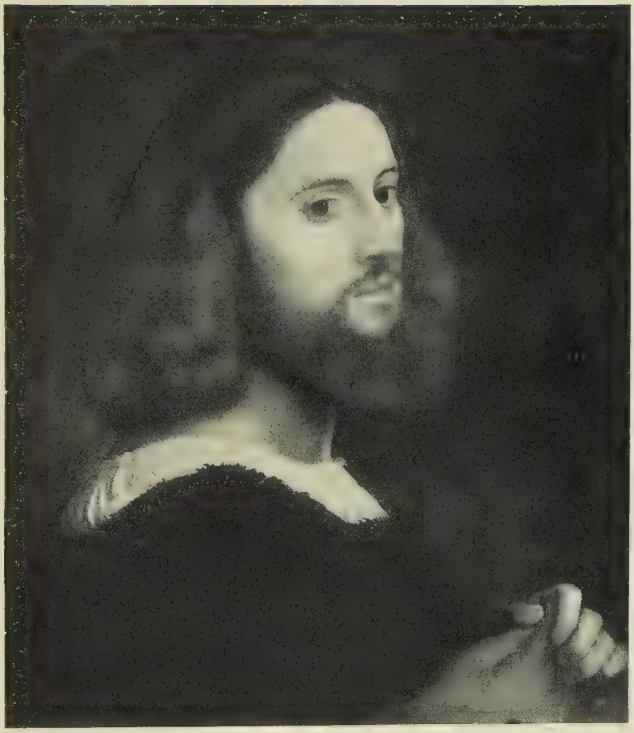
ABOUT 1478–1510?

"Something fabulous and illusive," said Walter Pater, "always mingled itself in the brilliancy of Giorgione's fame." His position as a great innovator, as the discoverer of a new expression in painting has been acknowledged by everyone from his

time to ours. But there remains a strange uncertainty as to which paintings of all those attributed to him are really by him. Only one is documented, the painting on the façade of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice, and of that nothing remains but a blur of vague colors. The critics have expended much energy on the subject, one claiming for him works of absurd differences of tendency and attainment, another reducing his representation to three or four pictures only, and the contest still goes on.

It is therefore a cause of satisfaction to find that a lately discovered picture like this Portrait of a Man has won the suffrages of the most prominent connoisseurs. Bernard Berenson accepts it enthusiastically. "Critics so frequently at odds in other cases," says Wilhelm Bode, "will scarcely fail to agree as to the genuineness of the Altman picture."

The portrait is that of a sensitive young man of melancholy aspect with long hair and a carefully trimmed beard. The frame (a very beautiful one, by the way, and of the time of the painting) cuts off his figure a little below the shoulders but shows his hands raised in the act of pulling off the right glove. He is of most distinguished and poetic appearance; and as he is looking straight at the beholder, it is strange that no ingenious critic has claimed it as a portrait of the artist himself. The head certainly fits the popular and legendary conception of Giorgione's personality. This theory might be upheld equally well as the other that it represents Ariosto, of whom the only likeness that



14
PORTRAIT OF A MAN
By Giorgione

has come down to us is a woodcut after a drawing by Titian, published in the edition of Orlando Furioso in 1532, which shows the poet as a man of advanced age.

The known history of the picture is meager. It belonged to Walter Savage Landor, who bought it in Italy, it is said, from the Grimani family, though the fact has not been substantiated. The Grimani were an important Venetian house which furnished three Doges to the Republic, one of whom, Antonio Grimani, had command of the Venetian squadron while Giorgione was alive. After the death of Walter Savage Landor in 1864, the picture was taken to England, where it remained until purchased by Mr. Altman.

15

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH SAINT JOSEPH AND A CHILD ANGEL

By Filippino Lippi

ABOUT 1457–1504

The Virgin is seated holding the Child on her knee, Saint Joseph is at the right, and a child angel at the left. Two diminutive, diaphanous cherubs hold a veil back of the Virgin's head. In the background are half-ruined arches through the openings of which is a landscape of strangely formed rocks and distant hills.

The picture belongs among the later productions of the artist, its date being about 1500. It was for many years in the collection of Madame de Couriss at Dresden.

16

THE CRUCIFIXION

By Fra Angelico

1387–1455

This little picture comes from the collection of the Marquis de Gouvello. Its only public appearance in recent times was at the Alsace Lorraine Exhibition held at the Louvre in 1885 under the auspices of the French Government for the purpose of raising funds for the help of the exiles from the lost provinces.

The arrangement of the picture is symmetrical. In the center is Christ on the Cross, at the base of which kneels Saint Mary Magdalen between Saint Dominic at the left and Saint Thomas Aquinas at the right, both wearing the black and white habit of the Dominican order. Back of Saint Dominic stand the Virgin Mary, a Bishop Saint (probably Saint Augustine), and probably Saint Monica. In corresponding positions at the other side are Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Francis, and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. There is a palm tree on each side of the cross and a landscape background, which consists of low hills and a wide expanse of twilight sky, much in the spirit of the painting of the last century.

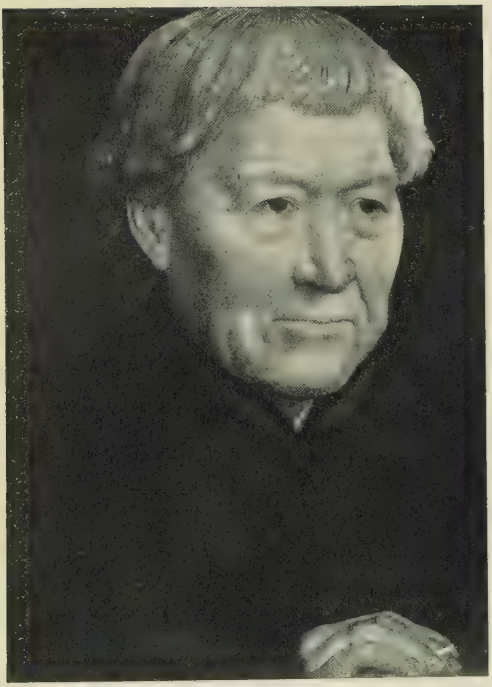
17

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN

By Hans Memling

ABOUT 1430–1494

This picture is worthier of Memling's reputation as portraitist than are the likenesses of Portinari and his wife. Like them it was shown at the Exhibition of



17

PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN

By Hans Memling

Flemish Primitives in Bruges in 1902. It was there ascribed by its owner, Baron Albert Oppenheim, to Jan van Eyck. James Weale speaks of it as "remarkably fine but of a later date than Van Eyck and probably the work of a German painter." Georges Hulin in the catalogue of the exhibition pointed out that it could not be by Van Eyck and was much nearer to the work of Memling, and the attribution there tentatively suggested has been since generally accepted.

According to the authorities, it is an early work, as early perhaps as the Triptych of Sir John Donne mentioned in connection with the Betrothal of Saint Catherine. But early as it may be, there is no uncertainty in the modeling or characterization. Without Van Eyck's miraculous power of rendering what was before him, Memling in his portraits shows convincing reality and at the same time an ability in interpreting personality according to his own conception, which the greater master did not attempt. Memling's opinion of the old gentleman who posed for him is clearly read in the likeness he painted. Humor and sharpness, wisdom and tolerance were the qualities he found in his kindly sitter, and these he has fixed in the portrait.

18 and 20

THOMAS PORTINARI AND MARIE PORTINARI, HIS WIFE

By Hans Memling

ABOUT 1430–1494

These portraits were freely discussed at the time of the Bruges exhibition in 1902, where they were

exhibited by Leopold Goldschmidt, their owner at the time. Georges Hulin, the compiler of the catalogue of the exhibition, enters them as they are here named. The attribution has been contested by some critics, James Weale suggesting that perhaps they might be the work of Hugo van der Goes.

Thomas Portinari, the agent of the Medici in Flanders, though a person of importance in the commercial and social life of his time, is remembered today as a patron of the fine arts and by the fact that the portraits of himself and of his family appear in the great altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes, one of the summits of Flemish painting, now in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, but until lately in the church for which it was intended, Santa Maria Nuova. This church was founded in 1280 by Tomaso's ancestor, Folco Portinari, who was the father of Dante's Beatrice. The altarpiece was painted about 1476 and, judging from the age of the sitters, these Altman portraits must have been executed several years earlier, ten or twelve years at least, one would say. It has been pointed out that the necklace which the lady wears in our picture is the same that appears in her portrait on the wing of the altarpiece in Florence. Besides these pictures, several portraits attributed to Memling are believed to represent Portinari and his wife. Two of these occur in the Passion of Christ, a small picture in the Turin Museum; another is the Man in Prayer, part of a triptych dated 1487 in the Uffizi, a picture which comes from the church of Santa Maria Nuova.

We are told that our panels were in the Volpi Collection, Florence, before they were acquired by Leopold Goldschmidt.

19

THE BETROTHAL OF SAINT CATHERINE

By Hans Memling

ABOUT 1430–1494

The scene takes place in a garden. A canopy with a background of red and gold brocade has been erected in front of a vine-covered trellis and before it, a little to the right of the center of the picture, sits the Virgin holding the nude Christ Child on her lap. Saint Catherine is a Flemish princess of the fifteenth century. She is seated on the ground at the left and raises her left hand toward the Infant Jesus, to receive from Him the betrothal ring which He is about to slip upon her finger. Her emblems, the wheel and the sword, are before her, half hidden under the folds of her dress of brown and gold brocade. Beyond and behind Saint Catherine, the donor, a young man in black, kneels and tells his beads. On the opposite side in the foreground is Saint Barbara reading a breviary, and her tower with its three windows is in the background. Two angel musicians in priestly garments are on either side of the Virgin: the one at the left looks smilingly at the Christ Child, his hand on the keys of his organ; the other, in a rich dalmatic, sings softly as he touches the harp strings. Beyond the flower-covered space where the figures are, is a quiet landscape. A

plain with trees, a horseman passing along a road which leads to a towered gate in a wall, people on an arched bridge over a little river, a round building, and a low hill are the items which make up the picture, of which the loveliness and tranquil piety escape the power of words.

No theme fitted the qualities of Memling's genius so perfectly as the Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine. Three versions of the subject by him are known. The earliest of these, the triptych of Sir John Donne, so called from the English nobleman who commissioned the work, is in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire in Chatsworth House. The arrangement of the central panel of this triptych is similar to the Altman picture, except that the figures of Sir John Donne, his wife, and daughter kneel in the foreground and that the setting is an open hall with columns instead of the garden. It is probable that this painting was executed about 1468 when Sir John visited Flanders in the train of Margaret of York at the time of the marriage of that princess to Charles the Bold of Burgundy.

After this in date comes the astounding Mystic Marriage of the Hospital of Saint John at Bruges, begun in 1475 and finished in four years. As every one knows, it is also a triptych, and the central panel is a modification of the triptych of Sir John Donne. Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist have been added and the simple columns of the early version, like those of a cloister, are here arranged like the columns of the ambulatory of the apse in a cathedral—a forest of columns.

19

THE BETROTHAL OF SAINT CATHERINE

By Hans Memling

Our picture must have followed soon after the finishing of the Bruges triptych. Saint Catherine and Saint Barbara are almost identical in type and pose, and the costumes similar. But the regal beauty of the Bruges masterpiece has been transformed in the Altman panel to something gracious and intimate. There the Mary is the Queen of Heaven who holds a God in her arms, while here she is a tender mother looking down at her baby and He for His part is a little roguish and amused at the pretty scene in which He plays the principal part. Then the austere figures of Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist are lacking in our variant and the maze of pillars and the pavement covered with an Eastern carpet have given place to the smiling countryside and the wild flowers growing in the grass. These changes account in part for the differing expressions.

It is not known who the young man for whom it was painted is, the one who kneels in our picture. The earliest record of the painting is when it belonged to Sir Joshua Reynolds. Before Mr. Altman bought the work it was in the collection of Leopold Goldschmidt in Paris.

21

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

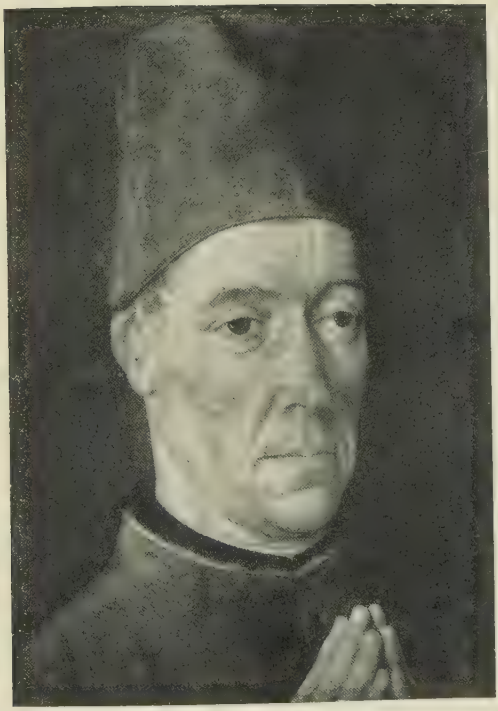
By Dirk Bouts

ABOUT 1410–1475

The sitter is a thin-faced man of early middle age with strong and earnest features. He is posed in the

manner so frequent in Flanders in the fifteenth century, his fingers joined as if in prayer. Only the upper part of the hands is visible, the frame cutting off the rest. As is apt to be the case in these portraits, the composition appears somewhat crowded, as if the panel were small for all that the thrifty painter made it contain. The person reminds one of a certain figure in the Legend of Otho series, Bouts's last commission, executed for the town hall of Louvain and now in the Brussels Museum; only two panels were completed at the time of the artist's death. This resemblance would indicate, as Max J. Friedländer has pointed out, that our picture dates from the later part of the painter's life. Bouts was appointed in 1464 "portraitist" of Louvain, his retainer, as the records show, being a piece of cloth out of which to make a dress of ceremony and ninety "plecken" to buy a lining for it. As painter to the city he was required to accompany the annual procession of the Holy Sacrament and the Kermesse, receiving with the other functionaries at the end of the procession a pot of Rhine wine.

Dirk or Tierry Bouts, as he is sometimes called, is counted among the founders of Flemish painting and one of the greatest of fifteenth-century artists. He may have been born in Holland; certainly he studied there, though the paintings of Jan van Eyck were the real foundations of his art. But in distinction to his Flemish contemporaries, one fancies that there is something of Dutch seriousness and reserve in his people, and that the human sympathy revealed in



21

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

By Dirk Bouts

his pictures prefigures in that sense the work of Rembrandt.

22

THE HOLY FAMILY

By Andrea Mantegna

1431–1506

This picture entered into the arena of modern discussion in 1904 with an article by Wilhelm Bode in the Kunstchronik, reviewing Paul Kristeller's book on Mantegna. In this article was given a reproduction of our picture, which Dr. Bode there pronounced to be a genuine work of the later time of the master. In 1902 the painting was sold out of the collection of Count Agosto d'Aiuti in Naples and was acquired by Consul Eduard Weber of Hamburg. The Weber Collection was sold in 1912 and soon afterward the Mantegna passed into the possession of Mr. Altman.

It is painted in tempera on canvas. The four figures fill the panel in the manner of a bas-relief; the background of lemon branches on a single plane immediately back of the heads strengthens the similarity. The Virgin, seated, holds the nude Christ Child, who stands with one foot on a cushion on her lap. Saint Joseph at the left and Saint Mary Magdalen at the right look out of the picture at the spectator. Of almost identical arrangement is a much-restored picture in the Dresden Gallery, the so-called Eastlake Mantegna, where Saint Elizabeth is introduced in the place which the Magdalen occupies in the Altman picture and the infant Saint John is

added. Our painting also has marked analogy with a work of doubtful authenticity in the Verona Museum, representing the Virgin and Child, Saint Joseph, and Mary Magdalen. The accepted date for these compositions is placed at about 1495, toward which time the Altman picture can safely be assigned.

Seymour de Ricci points out that our work corresponds with the description of a painting, which has since disappeared, mentioned in Ricche Miniere della pittura Veneziana by Boschini, published at Venice in 1674. A picture by Mantegna, The Madonna and Child, Saint Joseph, and Saint Mary Magdalen, is there spoken of as being in the Hospital for Incurables in Venice. "As no genuine Mantegna but the Weber (Altman) picture shows the same subject," says Mr. de Ricci in disposing of the question, "we may confidently identify the two paintings and can thus establish the original provenance of this Holy Family."

23

BORSO D'ESTE (?)

By Cosimo Tura

ABOUT 1432–1495

On the authority of Bernard Berenson this admirable little portrait is thus ascribed in the Altman catalogue. It has borne many names. When lent to the Art Treasures Exhibition in Manchester in 1857 by William Drury Lowe, it was called Portrait of a Youth in Profile by Piero della Francesca and at the Leeds Exhibition in 1868 it appeared

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THE HOLY FAMILY

By Andrea Mantegna

under the same title. This was changed at the Royal Academy Exhibitions of 1884 and 1893 to the Portrait of Sigismundo Malatesta by Piero della Francesca. The collection of Mr. Lowe was catalogued in 1903 by Jean Paul Richter, who judged our picture to be of the school of Ferrara, attributing it to Francesco Cossa, an attribution which was generally accepted up to the time of Mr. Berenson's pronouncement. Dr. Richter saw in the sitter not Malatesta, the terrible condottiere of Rimini, but rather a member of the family of the magnificence-loving Borso d'Este, perhaps his younger brother, later Duke Ercole.

The publication of the firm of art dealers from whom Mr. Altman acquired the work gives the name of the artist as it now appears but returns to Malatesta as the person represented. The publication states that "this head is clearly a perfect portrait" of him and reproduces a medal by Matteo de Pastis in proof. The resemblance is not convincing, however, either with this medal, which shows a man of middle age, or with a far more famous example which was not cited, the portrait of Sigismundo in prayer before his patron saint by Piero della Francesca at Rimini.

On the other hand, it is difficult to reconcile the dates of Borso d'Este as sitter (1413–1471) with those of Tura as artist (1432?–1495) in relation to the portrait of a youth who appears to be scarcely twenty. Several undoubted portraits of Borso exist and it is evident that there is a strong resemblance in the

features, the nose, mouth, and chin particularly, between these portraits and the young man of the Altman picture. One would call it a family likeness in any event, agreeing thus far with Dr. Richter. In l'Arte Ferrarese nel Periode d'Ercole I d'Este, Adolfo Venturi shows that in his capacity as court painter under Borso and Ercole one of Tura's important functions was the painting of portraits of the reigning family which, according to the custom of the time, were presented or exchanged on state occasions, such as marriages or betrothals. Though none of the many existing records of these portraits could apply to our picture, the theory that it might have been painted for such a purpose is not improbable.

24

VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ANGELS

By Sebastiano Mainardi

ABOUT 1450–1513?

The Virgin, with her head bowed and her hands joined in an attitude of prayer, is seated in the center of the picture with the Christ Child poised half lying on her right knee. He is supported by a child angel and raises His hands toward His mother. The composition is balanced by another angel whose arms are folded over the breast. Behind the Madonna is a strip of brocade and on each side are glimpses of landscape.

The work was formerly in the collection of Baron Lazzaroni in Paris.

23

BORSO D'ESTE (?)

By Cosimo Tura

25

THE LAST COMMUNION OF SAINT JEROME

By Botticelli

1447?–1510

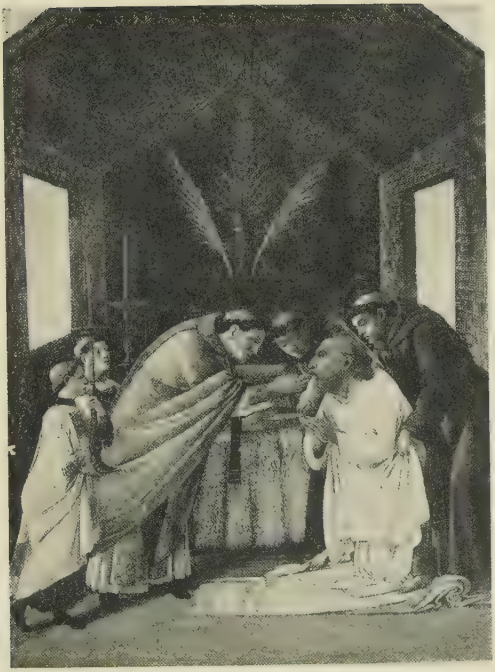
"Botticelli," says the Anonimo Gaddiano, "made very many little paintings which were most beautiful and among the rest a Saint Jerome, a singular work." Our Saint Jerome may well be the singular work referred to. It comes from the collection of the Marchesi Farinola at the Palazzo Capponi in Florence, being inherited from Gino Capponi, the statesman and historian, in whose time it was attributed to Andrea del Castagno. It has excellent credentials. Giovanni Morelli pointed out that it was an original by Botticelli and all the modern authorities on the school since his time have commented upon it. The fullest account is found in Herbert Horne's Botticelli (page 174 and following) and this account has been freely drawn upon in the preparation of this notice of the picture.

At least two old copies are known to exist, one in the Palazzo Balbi at Genoa and the other formerly in the Abdy Collection, sold in 1911. The subject is derived from a legendary history of Saint Jerome translated from the Latin into Italian, the Letters of the Blessed Eusebius, printed in Florence in 1490, about the time of the painting of this picture. These relate how Saint Jerome, sensible of the approach of death, took leave of those about him with admonishments and directions. When he had finished, one of

the monks brought him the Holy Sacrament. After he had confessed, he received the Eucharist and threw himself upon the ground singing the canticle of Simeon the prophet, Nunc dimittis servum tuum. After this there came a divine light in the room and some saw angels passing away on every side; others did not see the angels but heard a voice which called to Jerome promising him the reward of his labors. And there were some who neither saw the angels nor heard the voice from Heaven but heard only the voice of the dying man who said, "Behold I come to Thee, merciful Jesus! Receive me whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood." Then his spirit left his body.

Botticelli has pictured the story with the simplest means, leaving out the supernatural elements but losing none of its religious fervor. There are but six figures. Saint Jerome, aided by two monks, has left his bed and kneels to receive the sacrament, which a priest in a rose-colored chasuble and blue stole administers to him. Two acolytes carrying lighted candles attend. The action takes place in Saint Jerome's cell, built of wattled reeds and shown, as on the stage, with one wall removed. The figures are at the foot of the bed. At its head are a crucifix, palm branches, and a cardinal's hat. The clear sky, blue toward the zenith and fading into a luminous gray below, shows above the angles of the gable and through two windows, one at each side of the narrow room.

Mr. Horne finds fault with the exaggeration of the



25

THE LAST COMMUNION OF
SAINT JEROME

By Botticelli

size of the head of Saint Jerome but adds "this is perhaps the one defect in a picture which otherwise must be placed among the finest of Botticelli's smaller works."

26

MADONNA AND CHILD

By Andrea del Verrocchio

1435–1488

The London Times in its account of the sale in 1911 of the Butler Collection, of which this picture formed a part, said, "The great surprise of the sale was the price paid for the Madonna and Child catalogued as by Andrea del Verrocchio, a work of great beauty of the finest period of Florentine art; so much uncertainty is attached to the work of Verrocchio that a picture like this will always be much discussed, and this work is very close to the famous altarpiece in the Accademia in Florence; the picture is on panel and at Sir Walter R. Farquhar's sale in 1894 (when it was catalogued as by Pesellino) it realized 430 guineas; yesterday it started at 100 guineas and at 6,000 guineas fell to Mr. Harvey who was acting for Colnaghi and Co." It is interesting as an example of the rise in value of certain pictures in these times to know that Sir Walter Farquhar paid the sum of 64 pounds, 12 shillings for this Madonna and Child at the Bromley Davenport sale in 1863. In less than fifty years its value had increased almost a hundredfold.

The famous work in the Accademia that the Times refers to is the Baptism of Christ, in which one of the

angels has a certain likeness to the Madonna in the Altman picture. There is a drawing in the Uffizi generally accepted to be the study for the head of this angel. This has downcast eyes like our own Madonna and is in exactly the same position, though the forms in the drawing are more vigorous and sculpturesque. The Accademia picture is an early work of the master's, begun, it has been surmised, about 1465.

27 (IN CASE A)

CHRIST TAKING LEAVE OF HIS MOTHER

By Gerard David

ABOUT 1460–1523

The earliest mention of Gerard David that has come down to us is found in Guicciardini's Description of the Low Countries, 1528, in which his name occurs in the list of prominent painters "also Gerard, known to be among the best illuminators." The fact that besides being an excellent painter David was equally prominent as the chief of the great school of miniaturists of Bruges in the early sixteenth century should not be overlooked. Indeed, his first recorded commission, in 1488, was in the nature of miniature painting; namely, the decorating of the iron window bars of the prison where the citizens of Bruges shut up the Emperor Maximilian, who had displeased them.

On account of the miniature-like quality of this little painting, it forms a valuable addition to the artist's representation in the Museum. Several paint-

ings by him or by members of the same school are shown in Gallery 40, but the only one which is similar in treatment to this picture is the triptych by his pupil Adrian Isenbrant from the Lippman Collection. The figures are shown about half length against a gold background; Christ stands at the right, the Virgin and the two other Marys at the left. The picture is described and illustrated in the supplement to the Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst, May, 1911, in which Wilhelm Valentiner deals with the pictures by David which have passed into American collections since the publication of Bodenhausen's book on David in 1905. Here it is referred to as having been executed during the later part of the artist's full maturity.

Dutch Paintings

Fifth Room

Dutch Paintings

Fifth Room

IN ROOM 5 the seventeenth-century Dutch pictures are exhibited. Each painting is treated in the order of placing, commencing with the work nearest the door from ROOM 4, and proceeding to the left.

28

A YOUTH WITH A LUTE

By Frans Hals

1584?–1666

With the exception of Rembrandt, who was his junior by a generation, Hals is the greatest name in Dutch painting. His peculiar excellence is in the spontaneity and vivacity of his pictures. He was a practician of extraordinary skill as well, particularly in the manipulation of obvious brush strokes. It is a technique which has been and is fashionable among many modern painters, and this fact may account in part for the high appreciation in which the artist has been held of late years, after almost two centuries of comparative neglect. Of his portraits the Altman Collection contains no example, this work

approaching portraiture more nearly than the two other pictures by him hanging on the same wall of the gallery. Like the Hille Babbe and The Smoker belonging to the Museum (exhibited in Galleries 11 and 27), the Youth with a Lute partakes of the nature of a subject- or character-picture as well as of portraiture. The young man probably posed for the work but the painter's interest was not in the likeness, though doubtless the resemblance is excellent, but rather in the expression of a mood of joyousness and abandon.

The young man is seated in front of a curtain, a lute resting against his left arm. He is laughing and holds an emptied glass in his right hand, pouring the last drops of the wine on his left thumb, indicating thereby, no doubt, that the glass is empty and that he wants it refilled. E. W. Moes, in his book on Hals, lists this picture under the title The Ruby on the Finger Nail.

The picture comes from Ireland and was shown in the Dublin Exhibition of 1857. It comes from the collection of J. Napper of Lough Crew Castle, County Meath, and was sold by the Bishop of Meath in 1906.

29

YONKER RAMP AND HIS SWEETHEART

By Frans Hals

1584?–1666

This picture is of similar type to the Merry Company (No. 50). Yonker Ramp, or Lord Ramp, as

29

YONKER RAMP AND HIS SWEETHEART

By Frans Hals

it could be translated, must have been a famous roisterer of Haarlem in his time, and Hals has left several likenesses of him in various stages of tipsiness. In all probability he was as familiar a figure to the townspeople as was Hille Babbe, the old fishwife whose jolly and dissipated personality is preserved in several famous canvases, one of which, the property of the Museum, and attributed to Frans Hals the Younger, is shown in the Marquand Gallery (11). E. W. Moes calls the rubicund gentleman of The Merry Company, Yonker Ramp, but he and the young man of this picture could not be the same. Even were the Merry Company as late as the Yonker Ramp and His Sweetheart, which latter is signed and dated 1623, instead of being several years earlier, as is the case, the difference in ages between the two precludes the possibility, as the red-faced man is well past middle age, and in this work Yonker Ramp is in his first manhood. The picture shows him shouting out a drinking song as he holds up a glass of wine while a hilarious young woman with her arm around his neck cuddles as near him as his great feathered felt hat will allow.

The speed of the painting is bewildering, but the brush strokes are dashed on the canvas with perfect sureness in spite of it. As in The Merry Company, certain parts bear witness to a calmer and more considered handling, such, for instance, as the hand holding the glass (the awkward placing of which shows the lack of deliberation in the conception of the composition), the dog the young man fondles,

and the fireplace and raftered ceiling beyond the wall. But the figures, the heads particularly, might have been finished before Ramp finished his song.

In the catalogue of Mme Copes van Hasselt, Haarlem, 1880, this work appears under the moral title of Vive la Fidélité, but more in the spirit of the work is the name given to it in 1786 when sold with the collection of J. Enschedé, Haarlem, Jonker Ramp en zyne Liebste, Lord Ramp and his Mistress. At the Enschedé sale it fetched 21 florins 10 sols. The picture was lately in the Pourtalès Collection in Paris. A replica in the J. P. Haseltine Collection, London, has a curtain instead of the wall behind the figures.

30

HENDRICKJE STOFFELS

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

Hofstede de Groot wrote of this picture in l'Art flamand in 1909 and there pronounced it to be a work of Rembrandt of about 1656 and to represent Hendrickje Stoffels. Hendrickje was a peasant girl from North Holland who came to Rembrandt's house at first as a servant. She soon rose to a position of intimacy with her master and remained with him a long time. She was the model for many pictures, in some of which she is shown as a person of pleasant appearance, the most prominent example being the famous picture in the Louvre, painted about 1652. There is also an attractive likeness of

her at Berlin, the date of which is about 1656. The woman in our picture has no great claim to good looks, and a shadow on the upper lip does not add to her charms.

Dr. Valentiner, agreeing with De Groot, writes of the work as follows: "Although, it may be added, this portrait of Hendrickje reveals the comfortable kindliness and gentleness of her nature, it lacks the charm of some others—for example, of the one in the Museum at Berlin. Hendrickje, it should be remembered, was merely a girl of the people, and into so simple a model Rembrandt could not always read his own ideas, especially when, as seems here to have been the case, his main concern was for a special problem of light and shade."

This picture comes from the collection of J. Osmaston in England.

31

TOILET OF BATHSHEBA AFTER THE BATH

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

Bathsheba is seated on a stone bench covered with carpets near a bathing pool in a garden. Squatting before her, an old woman with spectacles trims her toe-nails, and a servant standing behind her combs her hair. The light is concentrated on the nude figure of Bathsheba, and there are all sorts of glittering things near by, a ewer, jewelry, and rich stuffs. In the background is foliage opening at the left where in the distance appears the royal palace,

with the dim figure of King David on its roof. Two peacocks are in the shadow by the steps which lead to the pool, and on the stonework is the signature Rembrandt Ft. and the date 1643.

This is a famous picture and its history may be pretty closely followed from the early eighteenth century. Here is a list of the collections of which it is known to have formed a part, and the prices it has fetched in changing hands at public sales:

COLLECTION	SOLD IN	PRICE
William Six	Amsterdam, 1734	265 florins
Heer Hendrick	Amsterdam, 1740	350 florins
Van Zwieten	The Hague, 1743	
Comte de Brühl	Dresden, 1763	
Poullain	Paris, 1780	2,400 francs
Le Brun	Paris, 1791	1,200 francs
Alexis de la Hante	London, 1814	105 pounds
Sir Thomas Lawrence	London, 1830	150 guineas
G. J. Vernon	London, 1831	153 guineas
T. Emmerson	London, 1832	240 guineas
Héris (Colonel de Biré, of Brussels)	Paris, 1841	7,880 francs
Steengracht (The Hague)	Paris, 1913	1,000,000 francs

It is a record of a long wandering, from about ninety years after Rembrandt painted it, up to its journey's end here in the Museum. It has passed from Holland to Germany, then to Paris, where two years before the Terror it sold for 1,200 francs—$240.00! It was taken to England with many other works during the Revolution, stayed there for more than sixty years before it returned to Paris, and thence returned to its old home in Holland. Then Mr. Altman bought it. It was his last purchase, arriving in New York a few months before his death.

Numerous engravings of the work exist; it is

31

TOILET OF BATHSHEBA AFTER THE BATH

By Rembrandt

mentioned in all the lists and where comments occur it is always praised. The same subject, painted ten or eleven years later, is in the Louvre (Collection Lacaze). As Marcel Nicolle has pointed out, the attitude of Bathsheba is similar in both pictures, and in each the old pedicure kneels before her. But the picture in the Louvre could in no sense be called a replica of this work, as the arrangement is dissimilar, and also the expression.

Subject pictures by Rembrandt are rare in America. In the John G. Johnson Collection is a work of this class, The Finding of Moses, a painting of a few years earlier than ours, which has many analogies with it. There is also another, the Baucis and Philemon, in the Otto H. Kahn Collection. For some reason or other the portraits have been more popular with American collectors, though to many Rembrandt's genius is shown in its loftiest manifestation in the biblical or mythological subjects to which he has given such an intense reality and at the same time such a sense of supernatural mystery.

32

WHEATFIELDS

By Jacob van Ruisdael

1628 (or 1629)–1682

"Of all Dutch painters Ruisdael is the one who resembles his own country most nobly. He has its amplitude, its sadness, its almost gloomy placidity, its monotonous and tranquil charm." In these

words Eugène Fromentin, whose contribution to the literature on Dutch art is by far the most valuable, begins the chapter of the Old Masters which is concerned with this artist, whom he ranks next to Rembrandt. Ruisdael was a painter of landscapes only. If a figure was necessary in the pictures, some friend, Adrian van de Velde or another, was called upon for help. In his prime he painted scenes of his native country; in his later years, suffering from the early blight which affected Dutch art, he attempted more sensational subjects, unsuited to his nature—torrents, mountain gorges, and the like—views for which he utilized the pictures and sketches of other painters.

His colors are generally brown and green with grayish skies. The Wheatfields is not of the usual sort, as the picture is lighted by a streak of sunlight and the colors are appropriate to that effect. He sometimes painted the sea and winter scenes like the little picture in the John G. Johnson Collection, but his favorite themes are an undulating country with a winding road, groups of trees, forest scenes, and always wide stretches of sky. No other painter has rendered the sky with such sympathy and understanding.

Little is known of his life except that, like the other great Dutch masters, he died in poverty and neglect. His pictures tell us of the sterling qualities the man possessed: seriousness, probity, thoughtfulness, an austere poetry, virtues often coupled with love of the open country.

The Wheatfields was one of four pictures which Mr. Altman acquired out of the Maurice Kann Collection in Paris in 1909 and it was shown at the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition in the same year. It was formerly in the possession of the Comte de Colbert La Place.

33

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

This portrait is a dated picture of 1660 when, though he appears older, he was but fifty-four. More than fifty of these self-portraits by Rembrandt have come down to us and in this series the evolution of his genius and the development of his personality may be clearly traced. At first they are experiments in light and shade or in the study of assumed expressions, or are incited by his love for fantastic costumes. As time goes on, they become more and more profound in psychological expression, several of these late works being masterpieces of portraiture. "Mirror pictures, as we know," says Dr. Valentiner, "usually hide under a forced expression that veritable self which drops the veil only when it is unobserved." Perhaps there is a wilful assumption of expression in some of these portraits, but it is so sustained throughout and so convincing a record of the thought of the moment that it ceases to be affectation. Those who happen to be familiar with the self-portrait of a year or so earlier, belonging to the Henry

C. Frick Collection, will find a comparison of the moods of that picture and our work an interesting one. In the Frick portrait, though it also was painted in a troubled time, he paints himself as though he were a philosopher or prophet to whom all things but his own thoughts are indifferent. In the Altman picture he is prematurely aged by his troubles and is pestered with worries, "the little cares and anxieties of daily life." His forehead is wrinkled and the mouth is drawn, but the cap is tilted a little jauntily on one side and the head is erect and proud.

The painting was owned in France in the eighteenth century, being in the collection of the Duc de Valentinois. It appears in England in 1826, when it was noted by Smith in his Catalogue Raisonné as belonging to Lord Radstock. Its owner before its purchase by Mr. Altman was Lord Ashburton.

34

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN ERRONEOUSLY KNOWN AS THOMAS JACOBZ HARING, THE AUCTIONEER

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

This, it is said, is a portrait of the artist's son Titus. In this case he would be in his seventeenth year, as the work is dated 1658. It should be compared with the likeness hung beside it (Number 35) painted three years earlier. "The portraits [of

Titus] of 1657 and 1658 show no longer a fresh plump countenance, but haggard, suffering features, dull eyes, and sunken cheeks." It must be avowed that the three years have made a great difference in the boy's appearance, but perhaps the artist, in these pictures done for his own pleasure, lacked interest in the exactness of the portrait. He may have used the features of his sitters and the effect of light and shade merely as the vehicle for the expression of the mood by which he was dominated at the time, and been careless of other things.

This is one of the pictures which Mr. Altman acquired out of the Maurice Kann Collection. It was shown at the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition in 1909.

35

THE ARTIST'S SON TITUS

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

The picture is dated 1655, at which time the boy was fourteen. He has a winning, rather delicate face with a "vague, dreamy expression." He has been dressed up for the portrait, as Rembrandt was so fond of doing. He has earrings, a wide-brimmed hat with a feather, and a brownish-red doublet over a plaited shirt.

Titus was the fourth child of Saskia, Rembrandt's wife, who, it is surmised, died at his birth, and the only one of her children who survived her. His short life is traceable in the work of his father, who used him as a model continually for portraits, as well as

for subject pictures and many drawings and etchings. He often figures as the young Christ, as Joseph, as Tobias, as Daniel, and appears in many other biblical pictures.

This admirable work also comes from the Rodolphe Kann Collection. It formerly belonged to E. Secretan, in Paris, and before that to the Comte Podstatzky, in Bohemia.

36

ENTRANCE TO A VILLAGE

By Meindert Hobbema

1638–1709

Hobbema was a pupil of Jacob van Ruisdael. When he was thirty years old he married a servant in the house of the Burgomaster of Amsterdam, and by his influence was made an official of the excise. After this he painted only occasionally, and later seems to have given up his art entirely. Most of the great number of his works were executed before his appointment, though his masterpiece, The Avenue of Middelharnis, in the National Gallery, is late, being dated in a way which is generally read 1689.

In distinction from his master there is little mood or poetic feeling in his pictures. His work is easy to identify on account of its general similarity of conception and technique.

The Entrance to a Village is an example of his usual plan. There are buildings, trees, and an open space with houses and a church spire beyond. The panel is signed below to the right, M. Hobbema.

The picture is described in Smith's Catalogue Raisonné under the title of A View of a Wooded Country, where it is said to have been imported by Thomas Emmerson and sold to the proprietor at the time (1835), John Lucy of Charlecote Park, London. More recently it belonged to Baron Lionel de Rothschild in London, and then to Rodolphe Kann.

37

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG WOMAN

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

This is the earliest of the Rembrandts of the Altman Collection, being dated 1633, when the artist was twenty-seven years old. He had moved from Leyden to Amsterdam two years before and was well launched on his career of success, having finished the Anatomy Lesson the previous year. The Young Woman is an excellent and characteristic example of his work of the time, marked by faithful likeness, discreet characterization, detailed and accurate drawing, and an impeccable surface. "The best portrait painters of the time," says Dr. Valentiner, "masters like Thomas de Keyser, Mierevelt, Ravestyn, and Moreelse, might have felt proud had they been able so to infuse with life such a characteristic head. As a composition it differs in no way from their works, but in the interpretation of the personality Rembrandt seems to unite the best qualities of them all—the accuracy of Mierevelt's

drawing, the tenderness of Moreelse's modeling, the strong seriousness of Ravestyn, the freshness and naturalness of De Keyser, while with the modesty of genius the young painter hides himself behind his work."

The picture was in the collections of the Princess Radziwill at the Castle of Nieswiz in Lithuania, and of von Lachnicki in Paris and Warsaw.

38

OLD WOMAN IN AN ARMCHAIR

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

The subject of this early picture, dated 1635, was not promising for a portrait, a plain old lady who would sit upright in her chair in the attitude of a peasant who poses for the village photographer, and who insisted on having herself shown with a pleasant expression. Rembrandt has made a great picture of her, nevertheless, by the sheer force of his technical power, the masterly unobtrusive drawing, the just and reasonable color, and the logical and easy handling. The uncompromising pose, in his hands, counts in the clarity of the characterization as much as the homely face, the gnarled, hard-working hands, and the neat dress.

It reminds Dr. Valentiner of Hals, who at the time of the picture was at Amsterdam painting some of his corporation groups, and whom Rembrandt emulated.

38

OLD WOMAN IN AN ARMCHAIR

By Rembrandt

The quality of pure expression which Rembrandt manifests so supremely in the great pictures done for his own satisfaction is not apparent in this painting. From its tranquil and matter-of-fact appearance one would little suspect that its author was to show himself one of the most unaccountable among painters. He seems to have had two natures, as Eugène Fromentin said, the careful practician, clear-minded, logical, objectively realistic, as in this work, and again the instinctive, inspired visionary, as in the Old Woman Cutting Her Nails.

39

MAN WITH A MAGNIFYING-GLASS

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

This work and its companion piece, The Lady with a Pink (No. 41), are believed by Dr. Valentiner to represent Titus, the son of Rembrandt, and his wife, Magdalena van Loo, and to have been painted soon after their marriage in 1668. Dr. Valentiner writes of them as follows: "She was the daughter of two of his oldest friends, Jan van Loo the silversmith and Anna Huybrechts, whose portraits he also painted. On the tenth of February, 1668, Titus was married to Magdalena, whose age, twenty-seven, was the same as his own. One wonders why the union was so long postponed. Rembrandt and Anna Huybrechts were present at the ceremony. Magdalena's father was no longer living. So perhaps it

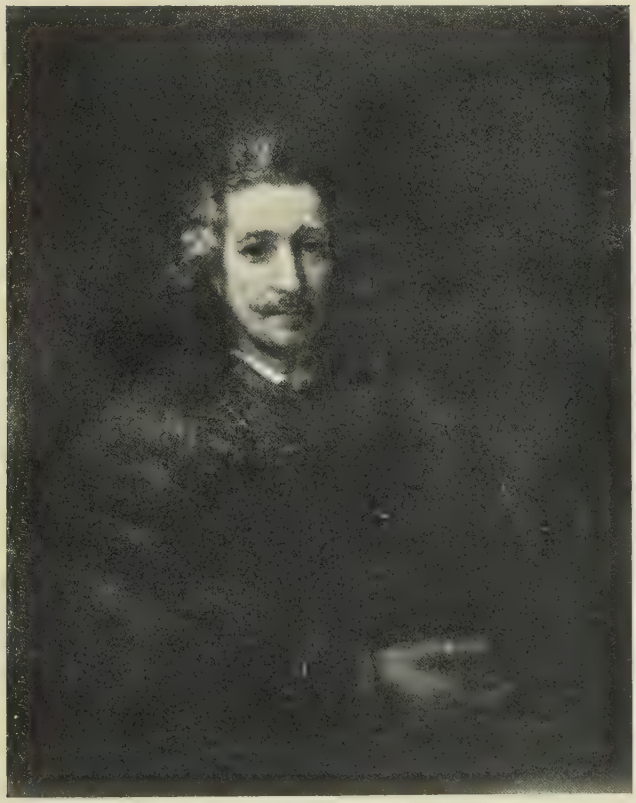
was he who had caused the long delay. It is the married pair that appear in the companion portraits of Titus and Magdalena in the Altman Collection, which date most probably from the summer of 1668. Titus holds a ring (not a magnifying-glass, as has often been said) and Magdalena has a flower in her hand. . . .

"It is remarkable how near to Rembrandt's own death fell those of the members of his family. Titus died in September, 1668, Rembrandt himself on the fourth of October, 1669; Anna Huybrechts must have died shortly before him, and Magdalena followed on the twenty-first of October."

The only recorded remark of interest or solicitude on the occasion of Rembrandt's death was made by Magdalena. She is reported to have said, "I hope Father has not taken Cornelia's gold pieces, the half of which were to come to me." This Cornelia was Rembrandt's daughter by Hendrickje Stoffels, who was with Titus the heir to a sum of money which was in Rembrandt's charge.

There is a great difference between the apparent age of the sitter and that of the person whom it is said to represent; Titus died in 1668, in his twenty-eighth year, while the man in our painting appears to be forty-five or fifty at least.

When the Lady with a Pink was sold by Mr. Sedelmeyer to Rodolphe Kann in 1889, this picture was bought, at a price of 45,000 francs, by Maurice Kann, the brother of the latter, from whose collection Mr. Altman acquired it in 1909. Both pictures



39
MAN WITH A MAGNIFYING-GLASS
By Rembrandt

were shown by Mr. Altman at the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition at the Museum in the same year.

40

PILATE WASHING HIS HANDS

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

"The Pilate of the Altman Collection sets forth the tragedy of old age no longer willing or able to cope with forces stronger than itself. Outside the place where Pilate sits is the clamoring populace, watching him, clashing its weapons, determined not to be balked of its prey. And Pilate yields but washes his hands as a symbol of innocence, a sign that he does not give his assent. Thus Rembrandt's version of the scene—as far as I know, the only one that he attempted—differs materially from the traditional version in which Christ is always present. Rembrandt did not want two principal figures in his drama and, characteristically, left out the Christ to make of the aged Pilate the tragic hero. The action is entirely between Pilate and the populace and, moreover, is but incidentally indicated. As we often find in the work of an artist's late years—of a Shakespeare or a Goethe in literature, of a Beethoven in music—the focus of the action is an accessory, an almost trivial, incident. The washing of the hands is ceremoniously depicted. The most prominent figure is a splendidly dressed boy who, with a richly embroidered napkin thrown over his

shoulder, is pouring water from a golden ewer upon Pilate's hands. He has nothing whatever to do with the emotional content of the drama. In the figure of Pilate himself the brocaded mantle is almost more noticeable than the head. Nor is the significance made clear of the old man behind him who, with his white beard and his headband, reminds us of Rembrandt's Homeric figures. He seems to be one of those dumb spectators that were introduced into some of the other pictures of Rembrandt's old age, like the Prodigal Son at St. Petersburg, merely to supply a contrast to that chief personage whose soul is torn by conflicting emotions. In the figure of Pilate, however, this conflict is scarcely more than suggested. In fact, there is nothing left of the dramatic passion of Rembrandt's youth. All animated expression of emotion is foregone. Pilate, seeming but half conscious of the voices of those who are nearest him, his exhausted will-power swayed by indefinite suggestions, bends his head in dumb and tired surrender. What the picture expresses is the twilight mood of one who has already almost passed out of life, a last upflaring of dulled but predominantly tragic emotions, a speechless brooding in which the confused clangor of arms seems to sound from a far distance."

This is Dr. Valentiner's interpretation of the picture and all that it is necessary to add is its history so far as that is known. It comes from the collection of Lord Palmerston, in Broadlands, where it was in 1794. It later belonged to Lord Mount-Temple in the same place, and was bought by Mr. Sedelmeyer,

the Paris dealer, in the late years of the last century, and sold to Rodolphe Kann, from whose collection Mr. Altman purchased it with eight other paintings in 1907.

41

LADY WITH A PINK

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

This painting and Number 39, the so-called Man with a Magnifying-Glass, are companion pieces. On the authority of Dr. Valentiner, who has made conspicuously successful studies in the matter of the identification of the portraits of the painter's family, they represent Magdalena van Loo and her husband, Titus, the son of Rembrandt, and were painted soon after their marriage in 1668.

The person in our portrait appears older than the twenty-seven years Dr. Valentiner gives her. One would say she was nearer forty, but Rembrandt was not always careful to give to his sitters their proper age, as is known from several documented cases.

These pictures remained together as far as is known up to about forty years ago. They were in the collection of Comte Ferd. d'Oultremont in Brussels, who sold them to Charles Sedelmeyer, of Paris, in 1889, 75,000 francs being paid for the Lady with a Pink. It later passed into the possession of Rodolphe Kann, at whose death Maurice Kann acquired it. Both pictures were bought by Mr. Altman out of this latter collection.

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OLD WOMAN CUTTING HER NAILS

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

This, the most remarkable of all the pictures in the room, is an example of Rembrandt's late time (the date, somewhat abraded, is 1658); it manifests the breadth and beauty of his painting at what seems to us today his greatest period, and shows also to the full his intellectual quality at this time, the profound insight into human experience that his work took on after fortune and popular favor had passed away from him. It was the year of the forced sale of his precious collection (itemized in the inventory which has come down to us), pictures, engravings, sculptures, armor and costumes, stuffed animals, bric-à-brac, and the like, and the "fifteen books of various sizes"—the things he had brought together during the time of his prosperity.

"In 1658 all his possessions were of necessity sold at auction," says Wilhelm Valentiner, "yet in this same year he produced several of the pictures which, compromising least with the claims of the actual, most clearly reveal his own conceptions, his own vision of the world. Such are the portrait of himself in the Frick Collection and that portrait of Titus in the Altman Collection which has mistakenly been called Haring the Auctioneer. As in these, so also in the Woman Trimming Her Nails, his art is Rembrandt's comforter, the expression of

41
LADY WITH A PINK
By Rembrandt

his self-deliverance, the voice of his most lofty idealism."

It is a painting of an old woman poorly dressed who stops her work to cut her nails. Every part of the picture, but in particular the old, furrowed face, the stiff, bony hands, the worn body inside the coarse clothing are made indicative of the sympathy the painter felt, not for his model alone, but for all humanity. All seems to have been analyzed for what it contains that is expressive and significant toward this end, so that the work is a poem on old age in which the verses are color and light and shadow. In Dr. Valentiner's interpretation the old woman has been "transformed into a sibyl far removed from the commonplaces of every-day life," and this is equally just, as the ends of realism and idealism meet in pictures of this calibre.

Its history is uncertain before 1779, when it was in the collection of Ingham Foster in England. It was bought and taken to Russia by Mr. Bibikoff, of St. Petersburg, from whom it passed to Mr. Massaloff in Moscow. In recent times it belonged to Rodolphe Kann and was bought when the Kann Collection was disposed of in Paris in 1907.

43

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

By Gerard Dou

1613–1675

Dou studied under Rembrandt at an early time, quitting him in 1630, and like Maes was influenced

by the quality of the work his master was producing at the time. With Dou this influence persisted throughout his whole life. He developed in the matter of elaboration, the crowding of detail, and a certain effort after picturesqueness. A favorite invention in this latter line was the trick of painting people at an open window seen from the outside, using the mouldings of the window as a sort of frame for the figure on the panel itself. He soon found it popular to add to this setting bas-reliefs and other architectural ornaments, vases of flowers, climbing vines, a bird cage, curtains, and one thing or another. These accessories occur in the Altman picture, in which the painter, when about forty years old, is shown standing back of a window, turning the leaves of a book with one hand and holding a palette and brushes with the other.

There is an eighteenth-century record of this work in the Voyer d'Argenson Collection in 1754. It is described in Smith's Catalogue Raisonné as belonging to the Chevalier Erard of Paris, who bought it in 1825 for 25,000 francs. It has since passed through the collections of Mr. Kalkbrenner and Mr. Say, of Paris, and so to its late owner.

44

A GIRL ASLEEP

By Johannes Vermeer

1632–ABOUT 1675

As Vermeer's life was short and his painting most deliberate and painstaking, he produced but few

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OLD WOMAN CUTTING HER NAILS

By Rembrandt

pictures. Some thirty-nine in all are known to exist at this time. Twenty-one of these were sold at auction in Amsterdam in 1696 among other paintings by various artists. Number 8 of this sale, catalogued as A Drunken Maid Servant Asleep behind a Table, by Vermeer, fetched 62 florins. This is the Altman picture. It is one of the few authenticated paintings by Vermeer now in America, of which two others are exhibited in Gallery 26, Young Woman with a Water Jug and Lady with a Lute.

Our picture shows a young girl asleep behind a table covered with a Turkey rug, on which are a blue dish with fruit, a napkin, a jug, and a knife. At the right is a door, half open, leading to another room where a table is seen with a small picture hanging above it. On the wall back of the figure is a picture representing Cupid, only a part of which is shown. This is one of Vermeer's belongings that he utilized several times in his backgrounds. Besides its use in the Altman picture, it occurs in A Lady at a Spinet, which is in the National Gallery, and again in The Music Lesson, in the Henry C. Frick Collection.

Vermeer's supreme quality is his painting of the cool, diffused light of an ordinary room. Each part of his pictures is steeped in light. Though every detail is insisted upon, his handling remains broad and ample, and he attains a beauty of smooth, lustrous surface that has never been exceeded.

Though counted among Rembrandt's pupils, he never studied directly with the master, having been taught by Rembrandt's scholar, Carel Fabritius.

The influence of the great genius, which is so apt to be crushing to the young artist, was far enough removed in his case to enable him to follow his own trend, which he attained at an early age and varied but slightly afterward. On this account it is difficult to assign a sequence to his production beyond his earliest examples.

The picture was exhibited by Mr. Altman at the Hudson-Fulton Celebration at the Museum in 1909. It comes from the Rodolphe Kann Collection.

45

LADY PLAYING THE THEORBO

By Gerard Terborch

1617–1681

Terborch is the most aristocratic of the Dutch genre painters. His subjects are similar to those of Vermeer, Pieter de Hooch, and Metsu. He was formed in the influence of Rembrandt but his style was modified by that of Hals, Van Dyck (with whom he came in contact during a visit to London in 1635), and Velazquez, who seems to have been a determining factor in his development. The Velazquez traits are particularly evident in his portraits, small pictures of the most austere arrangement, mostly full lengths in a silvery gray tone with little or no positive hue. His gamut of colors reminds us of Whistler's, but his drawing is far more impersonal and his point of view more anonymous. Distinction and reserve were the qualities he cultivated, though at one stage of his career, of which the Sol-

dier and a Young Woman in the Louvre is a famous example, his characterization is more decided. Generally, however, his personages are attractive types of the upper middle class. This is the case in the models for the Altman picture.

A young lady in a blue jacket trimmed with ermine is seated beside a table playing the theorbo, her music book before her. A gentleman with long hair, his hat on his knee, sits on the table listening to her music. A watch is close to his hand, and as one is tempted to read a story in these pictures one would say that she is finishing her practising while her impatient cavalier waits to start on the walk or visit which they have arranged. There is a fireplace back of the lady and a map is hanging on the wall.

Terborch painted a number of pictures of a similar motive, ladies making music and listening gentlemen, music parties, music lessons, and so forth. The one which resembles our picture most closely is in the Dresden Gallery. Here the people and the setting are the same, the lady in the same pose though the gentleman has a different posture.

The Lady Playing the Theorbo was acquired by Mr. Altman out of the collection of Lord Ashburton in England.

46

PORTRAIT OF A MAN

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

According to an inscription of a later date than the painting, which has since been removed, this is

the portrait of Cornelius Jansenius. The inscription was at the top of the panel and read: Portrait de Jansenius père d'une nombreuse famille mort en 1638 âgé de 53 ans. A false date of 1661 followed the inscription. Smith, in his Catalogue Raisonné, describing the picture in the early part of the last century, at which time it belonged to Lord Ashburton, thought that the portrait must have been done from another portrait or drawing by order of some friend or admirer of the deceased bishop. The style of the work shows that it must have been painted in the early forties, and Wilhelm Bode catalogues it as An Elderly Man with a Pointed Gray Beard, erroneously called Cornelius Jansenius.

It was sold in Paris in 1811 from the collection of Mr. Séréville for 5,071 francs, and belonged later to the Prince de Talleyrand. Smith, the compiler of the Catalogue Raisonné, bought it in 1831 for £500 and from him it passed to the collection of Lord Ashburton, in the hands of whose descendant it remained until recent times.

47

YOUNG HERDSMEN WITH COWS

By Aelbert Cuyp

1620–1691

The cattle pictures for which Cuyp is chiefly famous were but one of the branches of painting which he practised. He painted everything—landscapes, portraits, animals, genre scenes of gentlefolk or peas-

ants, and still life. His landscapes with their golden haze appear to have been at first the outcome of those of Jan van Goyen, but he developed the manner of his prototype into something far more weighty and robust, at the same time retaining and even accentuating the effect of enveloping air. "A beautiful Cuyp," says Eugène Fromentin, "is a painting at the same time subtle and heavy, tender and robust, aërial and massive."

The Young Herdsmen with Cows comes from the Rodolphe Kann Collection and has been cited by various authorities, Bode, Michel, De Groot, and others. It is a picture of the end of an afternoon with cows lying or standing in a field by a river bank. They are guarded by young herdsmen who are talking to a woman whose back is toward the spectator. Across the river is a wide view of undulating country, with the distance lost in the golden light which pervades the picture. The work is signed below at the left: A. Cuyp.

48

MAN WITH A STEEL GORGET

By Rembrandt

1606–1669

This picture is dated 1644, a year or so later than the famous Night Watch, the style of which it approaches. The pose of the sitter in our picture is similar to that of Banning Cocq, the central figure of that famous work, particularly in the posture of

the hand held out in front of the figure. It is an effort to secure relief and depth in the work, "a desire to produce something startling, something as yet unachieved in portraiture," says Dr. Valentiner.

Under the title Le Connétable de Bourbon, Smith in his Catalogue Raisonné describes our picture when it was in the collection of Lord Radstock, in London, in 1826. It was sold in London in 1881 for 850 pounds, 10 shillings, and has passed through the collections of E. Secretan of Paris and Adolphe Thiem of San Remo, who paid 23,000 francs for it in 1889.

49

INTERIOR WITH A YOUNG COUPLE

By Pieter de Hooch

1629–AFTER 1677

The connection between Pieter de Hooch and Rembrandt is not established by records, but the influence either of Rembrandt or of his pupils is evident in much of De Hooch's work. The painter began his career as footman and painter in the house of a rich merchant, Justus La Grange, who is known to have owned many of the artist's early pictures. After leaving La Grange's service he settled in Delft where Vermeer was living, and in emulation or imitation of this master, De Hooch's best painting was produced. Many of his pictures of this time have been mistaken for works of the greater artist. His place in the Rembrandt influence is somewhere between that of Vermeer and Nicolaes Maes, both

of whom he recalls. His peculiar accomplishment was the expression of the calm and peace of the Dutch houses, their tempered light, simple comfort, and immaculate tidiness. His interiors show us that the Dutch housewife of the seventeenth century was as scrupulous in sweeping and dusting as her descendant of today. He is fond of opening doors in his background and showing the room beyond with quiet light streaming in at a window, or perhaps a glimpse of a garden or a street with a sluggish canal beyond.

The Interior with a Young Couple is a characteristic production. In front of a bed by an open window a young woman is standing. At her left sits a man who snaps his fingers to call a little dog. Another room with gilt leather hangings shows through a door beyond. Hofstede de Groot places the picture around 1665 and in the artist's best period. This date is toward the end of De Hooch's sojourn in Delft. His work deteriorated steadily after this time, as he sacrificed his great talent in the effort to be popular, to paint grand people in rich costumes and magnificent halls.

The picture was formerly in the collection of Rodolphe Kann.

50

THE MERRY COMPANY

By Frans Hals

1584?–1666

A man with a flushed face and a string of sausages, pickled herring, and pigs' feet about his

shoulder holds on his knee a young woman of none too sober appearance. They sit before a table on which are all sorts of food and drink and a stein with the signature F. H. in Gothic letters. Two men are standing back of them; the one at the right leans on the chair-back and looks down at the lady with an expression which shows that they understand one another. The other, with a wooden spoon stuck in his cap, yawns as he holds his hand to his face. Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet at the inn of Dame Quickly, one would say, with Poins and Bardolph looking on.

The three pictures by Hals in the Altman Collection (Nos. 28, 29, and 50) all show the artist in his most jovial and rollicking mood. They seem to have been selected with the purpose of showing the wide difference in outlook between him and Rembrandt. There could be no further extremes in expression than between the boisterous humor of this picture and the other Hals on this wall, on the one side, and on the other the deep comprehension and the all-encompassing pity in the Old Woman Cutting Her Nails. Hals had his sober times, as the portraits of a Man and a Woman (in the Marquand Gallery) testify, but even in the days of depression of his old age, he could not lose the chance to laugh in his sleeve at his models and bring out their droll peculiarities.

Pictures like these in the Altman Collection are the records of a frankly jolly life without any Puritan restrictions. They are renderings of the gay

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THE MERRY COMPANY

By Frans Hals

life in the taverns, or other places of worse repute. "The Catalogues," says Wilhelm Bode, speaking of paintings of this sort in his Masters of Dutch and Flemish Painting, "usually describe the society represented in these pictures as aristocratic society, but the old Dutch catalogues of sales leave no doubt about the matter as they briefly designate them as *bordeedtjes* or something similar."

The virtuosity in these works is even more brilliant and astounding than in his portrait commissions. This freedom of handling and color is particularly noticeable in the two principal heads in the Merry Company. They seem to have been done in a half hour of great exhilaration, and the rest of the picture—the two men who stand back, the carefully executed still-life, and the almost painfully exact lace collar and the embroidered stomacher—appear to be the work of a much calmer time.

Dr. Bode dates this work at about 1616. From E. W. Moes's Life of Frans Hals we learn that at about this time the artist was a member of the Haarlem society of *De Wyngaerdtranken* (the branch of the vine) and also of another club called *Lieft looven al* (Love first of all). His membership in these organizations may have fostered the type of subject of which these Altman pictures give such lively examples.

The painting was exhibited at the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition at the Museum in 1909. It was formerly in the collection of Mr. Cocret, Paris. Dirck Hals, the younger brother of the painter, copied with slight

variations the figures in our picture for the principal group of his Fête Champêtre in the Louvre.

51

YOUNG GIRL PEELING APPLES

By Nicolaes Maes

1632–1693

Nicolaes Maes was a pupil of Rembrandt, whose studio he entered about 1650. His best work, painted before he reached middle age, shows the impress of Rembrandt's manner at the time Maes fell under his influence. Rembrandt's Portrait of Titus of this collection, painted in 1655, gives the approximate style which Maes imitated. Genre subjects such as the Altman picture are conceived in the style of his master's biblical subjects of this epoch. The handling, color, and concentrated sunlight all come directly out of Rembrandt, but the motive is his own and has the simplicity and directness which he preferred.

Against a plain wall, from which a lamp is hanging, sits a homely young woman intent on her work. On a table beside her, covered with a carpet, is a basket of apples, and on the floor is a bucket for the peelings. The scene is lighted by a bright ray of sunlight. It is a study from some member of his household probably. There are a charm and a contentment that never wear out about these simple paintings without any labored composition or underlying idea.

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YOUNG GIRL PEELING APPLES

By Nicolaes Maes

The work was in England in the early part of the last century. It was in the collection of Ralph Bernal in the twenties, where it was seen by Smith and described in his Catalogue Raisonné. Mr. Altman acquired it from the Rodolphe Kann Collection, which was dispersed in 1907.

Goldsmith's Work

Third Room

GOLD AND ENAMEL TRIPTYCH
Milanese, late fifteenth century

Goldsmith's Work

Third Room

THE two cases in the middle of Room 3 are arranged with the smaller and more precious objects in the Benjamin Altman Collection. In describing them the four pieces of goldsmith's work and jewelry in Case A will be discussed first. Next, the rock crystals will be described, proceeding from the four pieces in Case A to the remaining pieces in Case B. Finally the enamels will be taken as a whole, passing from the two earlier pieces in Case A, Room 3, to the remaining pieces in the central case in Room 4.

In Case A the eye is immediately attracted by an exquisite triptych of Milanese workmanship of the late fifteenth century; the oval of the triptych proper surmounted by a crucifix with the figure of our Lord. The doors are of gold enameled in translucent colors —*basse-taille*—with a representation of the Nativity on the outer side; on the inside, to the right and left respectively, are the Delphic and Erythraean Sibyls, who were supposed to have foretold the Virgin Birth. These doors, when open, show a superb clouded agate with an intaglio of Saint Sebastian. On the reverse

of the central panel, in translucent enamels on gold, is a splendid vesica-shaped glory with a representation of our Lady and the Holy Child as described in the words of the Apocalypse, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet." The scrolls bear the usual inscriptions, Primo genitum peperit filium suum, "she brought forth her first born son," and on the reverse, Ora pro nobis S. Sebastiane, "pray for us, Saint Sebastian."

To a great many, the history of goldsmith's work and jewelry in the sixteenth century centers around the name of one man—Benvenuto Cellini. Goldsmith, jeweler, sculptor, and medalist, a protégé of popes and princes, he has left to us in his Autobiography a singularly vivid and picturesque account of his life. While it is impossible to accept at face value the belief in his powers which a candid self-glorification reveals to us, or even to allow him a place as a genius who has moulded an age or founded a school, his fame rests secure as an extraordinary artist and a most admirable and splendid technician, versed in all the secrets of his art.

One of the greatest treasures of the Altman Collection is the cup or salt cellar of gold and enamel, executed by Benvenuto Cellini in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, and generally called the Rospigliosi cup (Case A). It belonged formerly to Prince Rospigliosi of Rome, who inherited it from his grandfather, Prince D. Clementi Rospigliosi, Grand Master at the court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.

CUP OF GOLD AND ENAMEL, CALLED THE ROSPIGLIOSI CUP

By Benvenuto Cellini

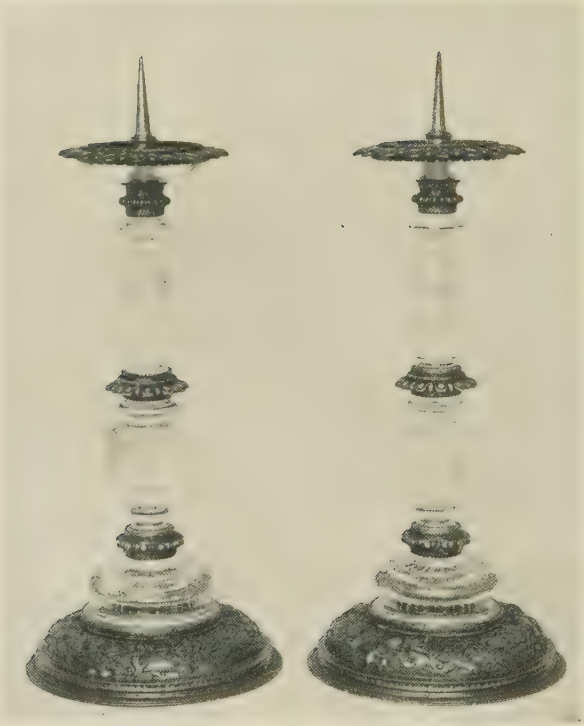
Prince Rospigliosi did not have any documents of a nature to establish positively the absolute authenticity of the attribution. On the other hand, modern criticism has been able to trace definitely, from the descriptions in Cellini's writings, but one of the larger pieces which Benvenuto classed under the comprehensive term "grosseria." This single piece, the salt cellar made for Francis I of France, is now at Vienna. However, Plon and other scholars, who have devoted themselves to a study of Cellini and his works, hold that this "Rospigliosi Cup" is undoubtedly his handiwork; the sumptuousness of the design, the subtlety of its workmanship, and the richness of the enameling corresponding to a taste of which no other artist of the time was capable. The cup, fashioned in the form of a shell, rests upon a fantastical dragon with wings outstretched, which in turn is supported by a tortoise enameled in yellow and black. But it is on the sphinx seated upon the rim of the shell that Cellini has lavished the utmost resources of his workmanship. The figure is beautifully modeled; the wings and tail enameled with transparent greens, reds, and blues of an extraordinary brilliance; a great pearl hangs from her breast and smaller pearls are in her ears.

Another piece in CASE A, a cup of jasper, also in the form of a shell, is mounted in enameled gold. A fanciful marine dog sits on the lip of the cup. It is a charming piece of workmanship, quite characteristic of the more florid taste of the later part of the sixteenth century. It was formerly in the Spitzer Collection.

The most distinctive form of Renaissance jewelry is the pendant. With the exception of crucifixes, it usually takes the form, in the later part of the sixteenth century, of an elaborate figure subject, the precious stones in themselves being of secondary importance. Very typical is the pendant in CASE A. It is of gold, the beautifully modeled and enameled figure of Neptune standing in an architectural niche, while on the reverse Neptune rides upon his sea chariot drawn by the dolphins. It is set with diamonds and rubies and with the pendent pearls which are particularly characteristic of jewelry of this period.

Crystals

Third Room



CANDLESTICKS OF ROCK CRYSTAL
AND SILVER-GILT

German, sixteenth century

Crystals

Third Room

ROCK CRYSTAL is a pure, translucent variety of quartz, possessing a double refraction of light. It is usually white in color but at times brown, black, or yellow. Although we know this, the world for long centuries labored under the misapprehension of the ancients, stated by Pliny in his famous Natural History and quoted by Sir Thomas Browne in his work on Vulgar Errors, that "Crystal is nothing but snow or ice concreted, and, by duration of time, congealed beyond liquation." Perhaps it was this unique quality of the rock crystal, as well as its peculiar natural beauty, which gave it value in the ancient world; for while crystals have been and are found in many places on the earth's surface, fine pieces capable of being fashioned into vessels of sufficient size are rare.

Among the Egyptians and the Assyrians it was used to some extent for sacred scarabs and cylindrical seals and among the Greeks and the Romans for intaglios—a fact sufficiently attested by the few we have in modern collections. The Greeks also fashioned the crystal into vases, some examples of early date

coming from Cyprus. But it was above all at Rome, in the period of greatest luxury under the Empire, that this precious material came to be regarded as of extreme value and to be sought for, so that it might be worked into drinking cups. A mania took possession of the fashionable world, enormous sums being paid for perfect vessels. We know that Nero, informed that his Empire was lost to him, dashed to the ground two crystal bowls engraved with scenes from Homer, that the world should be the poorer by their loss and that he might in some degree revenge himself upon mankind.

With the decline and fall of the Empire the demand and the art declined, yet we find mention of crystals here and there through all the Middle Ages in chronicles and inventories. We read that Gregory X, in 1271, sent by Marco Polo "many fine vessels of crystal as presents to the Great Khan," the most splendid and precious things that the Pope could command.

But it was at the beginning of the fifteenth century that rock-crystal carving again came into its own, reaching the height of its popularity and technical perfection in the sixteenth century. It is to this period, with one exception, that the pieces in the collection belong.

The first piece in date (Case A) is a covered cup of German workmanship, the only fifteenth-century example in this collection. The cup is cut to twelve faces, each decorated with circular depressions, the foot supported by three putti, the whole mounted in silver-gilt, set with jewels of a barbaric beauty—sap-

TAZZA OF ROCK CRYSTAL
AND ENAMELED GOLD
Italian, sixteenth century

PORTABLE HOLY-WATER STOUP

Italian, sixteenth century

phires, rubies, emeralds, and pearls. The significant fact is that the cup exhibits no traces of the engraver's art and shows plainly that the Gothic traditions had not as yet lost their force. In general, we may say that the crystal workers of the fifteenth century relied very little upon the engraver. It remained for the artists of the sixteenth and later centuries to add the beauties of engraving to their other resources. Compare this piece with the covered cup in the same case, also of German workmanship, but of the sixteenth century. Here there is no trace of Gothic influence. The Renaissance spirit has triumphed and the cup is engraved with the most graceful of floral arabesques. The other pieces in CASE A, the ewer of German workmanship, set with rubies, and the reliquary of Italian workmanship, are also of the sixteenth century. This reliquary, oval in form, is decorated with a panel representing the Annunciation, in *verre eglomisé*, a term that has come to be used for all painting on the reverse of glass or rock crystal, so called from a French artist, Glomi, of the eighteenth century, who rediscovered or reapplied an old art.

In the other case (CASE B) are gathered the principal pieces, an extraordinary collection of sumptuous works. Two German pricket candlesticks of the sixteenth century were doubtless intended for an altar of importance; their bases are of silver-gilt decorated with delightful figures of animals in repoussé work. In the center is a tazza, remarkable not only for size and beauty of proportion, but for the enameled

gold setting, jeweled with rubies, sapphires, and pearls.

An important Italian piece of the sixteenth century, a portable holy-water stoup, formed part of the ecclesiastical furniture of the great Spanish cathedral of Valencia, and was used in its ceremonials, carried by an acolyte as the priest sprinkled the congregation with the holy water before the celebration of the high mass. It is of perfect form, the body gadrooned and engraved with floral festoons, the handle mounted in gold enameled in beautiful colors and set with pigeon-blood rubies. Another noteworthy piece is the plate attributed to Valerio Belli, called Il Vicentino, whose work marks the culmination of the crystal engraver's art in the first half of the sixteenth century. This piece merits the attribution by the refinement of its technique and the classical treatment closely resembling the workmanship in pieces definitely known to be from his hand.

The pax came from a chapel in the Cathedral of Ávila in Spain. It is of unusual beauty, probably of Milanese workmanship. In design it corresponds to a type generally introduced in the fourteenth century when the pax took a form inspired by the architecture of the period. In the same manner this pax, dating as it does from the sixteenth century, reflects the more florid architectural fancy of the High Renaissance. The central representation of the Adoration of the Magi is in *verre eglomisé*, framed in gold set with pigeon-blood rubies, which vie with the

EWER OF SMOKE-COLOR ROCK CRYSTAL

German, sixteenth century

ROSE-WATER VASE OF ROCK CRYSTAL

Italian, sixteenth century

glowing colors in the robes of Our Lady, Saint Joseph, and the three Magi. The plinth and the entablature are decorated with circular medallions in *verre eglomisé*, representing a Doctor of the Church, Saint John, Saint Peter, a Bishop, Mary Magdalen, and Saint Francis. The entablature is surmounted by Saint George and the Dragon in enameled gold.

In the early Christian church before the celebration of the Eucharist, the Bishop saluted the congregation with the words, "The peace of God be with you," the congregation answering, "And with thy spirit." Thereupon the deacon bade them salute each other with a Kiss of Peace in sign of a perfect reconciliation, the clerics embracing the bishop and the laymen each other, the men the men and the women the women. In the thirteenth century this practice had fallen into general disuse, partly owing to the fact that the church had departed from its original custom, the male and the female worshipers no longer being separated during the service. In lieu of this, the church substituted the pax, upon which the worshipers bestowed the Kiss of Peace. Now the pax is not ordinarily used. The members of the clergy in the service of the mass give the Kiss of Peace as they did in the early church, but the congregation no longer takes part in the ceremony.

The four other pieces in Case B, probably of the late sixteenth century, while lacking the perfection of the finest period, still show a splendid vigor of design and technique. Notable is the smoky crystal ewer of German workmanship, particularly interest-

ing as the only example in this collection of a beautiful and much prized variety of crystal. The three other pieces are of Italian workmanship: the bowl with the dolphin handles; the cup in the form of a lobed shell, an eagle resting on the lip; and the rose-water vase used to sprinkle the hands of the guests at ceremonial banquets.

Enamels

Third and Fourth Rooms

Enamels

Third and Fourth Rooms

ENAMEL in essence is glass—powdered, made into a paste by the addition of water, colored by the various metallic oxides, applied as the artist may desire to the metallic base, and fused in the heat of the furnace. Whatever the technical method, be it cloisonné, champlevé, *basse-taille*, or painted enamel, this vitrified paste is the medium with which the artist works. Cloisonné was the earliest method used. Upon the metal base, usually gold, the intricacies of the design were traced by means of tiny flattened wires soldered to the ground. The cloisons, that is, the compartments so formed, were then filled with the various pastes, fused, and the surface smoothed and polished. This was the method of the Byzantine school. Champlevé, the mediaeval process, was the direct opposite of cloisonné. The artist with his burin hollowed out the metallic surface, later filling his design with the enamel to form a *champlevé* or field of color raised to the original level of the surface. In the late twelfth and the thirteenth century this technique reached the fullest development in the great French school

of Limoges and the German schools of the Rhine and the Moselle.[1]

Third Room

In this collection there is one example of champlevé enamel, from Limoges, a châsse in CASE A, ROOM 3, dating from the second half of the thirteenth century. The châsse, the most common type of mediaeval reliquary, represents in form a gabled building, and was intended to house the relics of a saint or martyr. This example is particularly effective in color, the figures of the Blessed Saviour, Saint James and Saint John, the Agnus Dei and the angels, which are reserved in the copper-gilt, contrasting splendidly with the enameled cobalt ground, the light blue and the turquoise of the medallions. In technique it shows workmanship typical of the later half of the thirteenth century when the figures were reserved in the metal and the background enameled, an exact reversal of the earlier practice.

In the fourteenth century a new process of enameling, probably originating in Italy, became popular. It is known as *basse-taille*, or enameling with translucent colors on sunk relief. The base is usually silver, but sometimes gold was used for particularly sumptuous pieces. In this same case is an example of this translucent enamel, a diptych of Italian workmanship of the fifteenth century. One wing bears a representation of the Adoration of the Magi; the

[1]Of these champlevé enamels a remarkable collection is exhibited in the Morgan Wing, Galleries F 2 and 3.

other, the Adoration of the Shepherds. It is a very splendid piece, the high lights and the flesh tones painted in opaque white, the reflected light from the silver ground enhancing the blues, golds, pinks, and greens of the translucent enamel.

In the second half of the fifteenth century the process of painted enamel began to supplant the earlier methods in popular favor, and was speedily brought to perfection, especially at Limoges which became once more the great center of the enameler's art. This painted enamel was a complete revolution in technique. It was found that the enamel needed no cloisons or channels to attach it to the surface, if the metal plate, usually of copper, was covered on both sides with the enamel. The face of the plate was therefore usually covered with a white enamel and the reverse with a counter-enamel of waste. Upon the enamel base the design was painted in the desired colors, the enamels being united with the base by fusion.

Fourth Room

Seven examples of this technique are exhibited in Case A, Room 4. The earliest piece is the Kiss of Judas by "Monvaerni." This, in all probability, was not the artist's name, but by a curious mistake it has come to be applied to a class of primitives with certain characteristics of style which can be roughly dated to the last quarter of the fifteenth century. The dominant colors are blue and gold. The blue ground is sprinkled with clouds and stars

of gold and the greater part of the robes are blue but with innumerable cross-hatchings of gold. The style is harshly realistic but forceful; a tense dramatic feeling animates the crowded composition. Another plaque of the "Monvaerni" group, representing the Crucifixion, is in the Morgan Collection (Gallery F 4).

The most celebrated of the Limoges enamelers of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century is Nardon Pénicaud, who was born about 1470 and lived until 1542 or 1543. The enamels of this period are rarely signed or dated, but happily, a fine enamel in the Cluny Museum, representing the Crucifixion, bears Nardon's name and the date 1503 (new style 1504). Consequently, it is possible by comparison to assign with reasonable certainty to Nardon or to his atelier a group of enamels showing the same stylistic peculiarities as the Cluny plaque.

Belonging to this group are the wings of a triptych in Case A representing the Angel Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin, this scene of the Annunciation flanking a central panel of the Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds. The wings and the central panel were not made originally to go together. The wings are characteristic enamels of the atelier of Nardon Pénicaud, if not perhaps the work of the master himself. The central plaque is different in style, although of the same period—the beginning of the sixteenth century—and may be assigned to the so-called Atelier of the Large Foreheads, a name given to a group of Limoges enamels showing the peculiarity indicated by this designation.

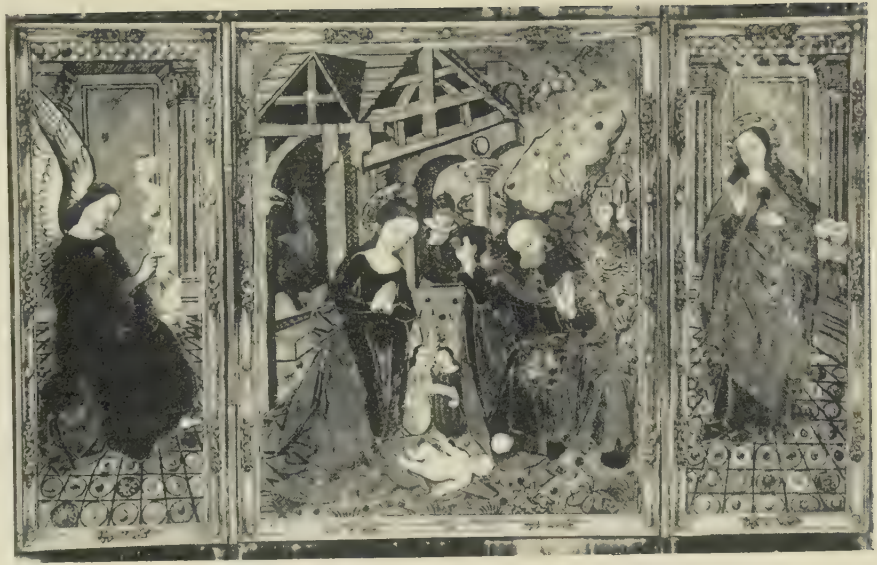
Other productions of this Atelier of the Large Foreheads are the wings of a second triptych in the collection; they represent the Nativity and the Circumcision. The central plaque, having for subject the Annunciation, is a work of the Atelier of the Triptych of Louis XII, a designation given to a group of enamels of the epoch of Nardon Pénicaud that are similar in style to the triptych of the Annunciation with portraits of Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the most important enamel in this group. The magnificent Altman enamel, formerly in the Spitzer, Hainauer, and other well-known collections, and the two panels forming the wings were not originally together. Armorial plaques of modern enamel have been added to equalize the uneven proportions of the panels. Another splendid example of these Limoges enamels of the beginning of the sixteenth century is a triptych representing the Nativity with the Adoration of the Shepherds and, on the wings, the scene of the Annunciation. This triptych, formerly in the Hainauer Collection, is another characteristic production of the Atelier of the Triptych of Louis XII.

In general these painted enamels of Nardon Pénicaud and of his contemporaries exhibit a restrained palette in which dark blue, violet, and green are conspicuous. The overabundance of detail and the insistence on gold, so characteristic of "Monvaerni," are lacking, but the whole picture is studded with "jewels"—solid lumps of glass fused upon the surface of the enamel. The flesh tones have the

curious violet tinge typical of the early work, when the enameler had no reds, except a very deep shade, and was compelled to use a faint wash of manganese as a substitute.

Léonard Limousin is one of the most splendid figures in the long list of French enamelers. He was born about 1505 at Limoges, but the decisive fact of his life was his removal to Paris at the command of the King. There he came into direct contact with the new movement, for Francis I was the great patron of the French Renaissance. In Nardon Pénicaud we have the lingering Gothic influence; in Léonard Limousin, the untrammeled art of the full Renaissance. His art covered a wide field, for he fashioned not only decorative pieces and plaques but a very large number of portraits. These portraits are his most characteristic works, since they constitute his personal contribution to the history of enameling. Case A contains two very typical pieces, the portraits of two well-known Huguenots, François de Maurel and Claude Condinet. They are signed in a usual manner, L L, and both are dated 1550, when Léonard Limousin was at the height of his powers.

In the same case is a plate by Jean Limousin, 1528–1610, probably a close relative of Léonard, although it is impossible to establish the exact relationship. The plate is decorated with pure Renaissance arabesques and masks, and with a representation of Abimelech gazing down from the top of a classic portico upon Isaac and Rebekah, while in the background the herdsmen of Gerak and Isaac strive



TRIPTYCH OF LIMOGES ENAMEL

Atelier of the Triptych of Louis XII

French, beginning of the sixteenth century

for the wells of Esek and Sitnah. The colors are very striking, the opaque enamels contrasting with the *paillons*—small areas of translucent enamel on a base of silver foil. The reverse is decorated with painted ornament in grisaille.

Sculpture

Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Rooms

Sculpture

Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Rooms

THE sculpture, which is distributed through Rooms 4, 6, and 7, is numbered according to the order in which it is placed. Thus the visitor who uses this Handbook will begin with the marble Bust of a Youth, No. 52, School of Verrocchio, at his left as he enters from Room 3, passing next to the marble group, Virtue Overcoming Vice, by Giovanni da Bologna, at the left, and proceeding always in that direction until he is again at the point where he entered. Nos. 69 to 72 are in Room 6; Nos. 73–78 in Room 7.

Among the twenty-seven pieces of sculpture, the Italian school of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has the largest representation, fifteen examples in all—marble, terracotta, stucco, and bronze. There are eight French sculptures of the eighteenth century and one of the sixteenth. Late Gothic and Renaissance sculpture in Germany and Holland is represented by two examples. The number is completed by a Roman bust of the classical period.

Fourth Room

52

BUST OF A YOUTH

School of Verrocchio

FLORENTINE, FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The round-faced smoothness of adolescence in this lifelike bust of an unknown youth does not conceal the personality which is never lacking in the Florentine character during the Renaissance. Verrocchio, the sculptor of the great equestrian figure of Colleone in Venice, was signally gifted in translating this strength of personality into stone or bronze. This bust cannot be definitely ascribed to one particular member of Verrocchio's following, but it shows the high quality characteristic of his immediate school, although some critics hold it to be a work of an artist influenced rather by Mino da Fiesole than by the less suave, more rigorous, and greater master. The bust was long owned by the Ricasoli family in Florence.

53

VIRTUE OVERCOMING VICE

By Giovanni Bologna (Jehan Boulogne)

FLEMISH, ABOUT 1524–1608

Born in Flanders, Gian Bologna worked most of his life in Florence. Although a foreigner, he dominated the late period of Renaissance sculpture in Italy. His style, showing the influence of Michelangelo, is characterized by a mannered but vigorous classicism.

The relief belonging to the Museum, representing Florence overcoming Siena, or—to use the more familiar title—Virtue Overcoming Vice, shows the sculptor's suave yet lively modeling of the human figure, which he has here contrived to make heroic in effect in spite of the smallness of the actual dimensions of his marble. It should be noted that the architectural background of this piece is a later addition and not part of the sculptor's original design, which may be seen in the large marble group, executed probably about 1566, now in the Bargello, Florence.

54

CHARLES IX, KING OF FRANCE

By Germain Pilon

FRENCH, 1535–1590

Pilon spent most of the productive period of his life in working for the French Court, which under Catherine de' Medici and her sons, offered employment to a host of artists in widely diversified fields. Among the sculptors of the epoch, Pilon was the most successful, his only considerable rival being Jean Goujon, whose genius was constantly thwarted by ill luck.

The marble head included in the Altman bequest is interesting not only as an evidence of Pilon's technical attainments, but also for its historical significance. The subject is Charles IX, King of France, and second son of Henry II and Catherine de' Medici. He was born in 1550 and bore the title of Duc d'Orléans until on the death of his brother he ascended

the throne in 1560. He died in 1574, remembered chiefly, and not enviably, as having been the tool of his mother and the instrument through which she brought about the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, which the King decreed in 1572. The bust was executed toward the end of the young King's not very creditable life, and could scarcely have flattered the royal sitter. This work of Pilon's remained from the time of its execution until recently in the ancestral château of the Duc de Montmorency Laval.

55

MADONNA AND CHILD

By Donatello

FLORENTINE, 1386–1466

The poignant drama of the relation between the Christ Child and His Mother filled the mind of the sculptor of this relief, who handled the theme with ever-growing intensity in the frequent repetitions of the subject which every artist of the time was called upon to execute. Donatello was a prophet in his generation and his work has an austere strength and a deep poetic quality found only in the creations of supreme masters. His Madonnas are imbued with mingled tragedy and tenderness, qualities which in this example are reflected to the full. The Altman relief, of terracotta painted and gilded, may be ascribed to that period toward the middle of the fifteenth century when he was in Padua executing his superb sculptures for the Church of S. Antonio. The Altman relief was at one time attributed to

56

MADONNA AND CHILD

By Luca della Robbia

Michelozzo, the contemporary and fellow-workman—although scarcely the equal—of Donatello, but the attribution to the greater artist is now generally accepted. The relief, which is enclosed in a characteristic frame of the period, was formerly in the collection of Rodolphe Kann in Paris.

56

MADONNA AND CHILD

By Luca della Robbia

FLORENTINE, 1399–1482

This charming group, in its fine simplicity and unpretending beauty, is excelled by few works of those Florentine modelers whose enameled terracottas rival the more pretentious marble sculptures of the time. This Madonna is definitely accepted as the work of Luca della Robbia, who with his kinsmen, Andrea and Giovanni, gave the family name to this variety of sculpture. The white enameled surface of our group is unrelieved by color except for touches of manganese on the eyes of Mother and Child and the black inscription on the scroll, the Latin equivalent for "I am the Light of the World."

57

MADONNA AND CHILD

By Antonio Rossellino

FLORENTINE, 1427–1478

The charm of sentiment and fine artistry distinguishing all Florentine sculpture of the fifteenth century are present to a high degree in this marble relief

of Christ and His Mother, which represents one of the most popular Italian sculptors, Antonio Rossellino, at an especially happy moment. This artist made many Madonnas, and illuminated them all with his understanding of the humanity in the tender relationship between the divine Mother and Son. The Madonna in the Altman bequest, which was formerly in the possession of the Conti Alessandri in Florence and later in the Hainauer Collection, is a well-known work of the master, and resembles a number of similar reliefs from his chisel in the museums of Europe. The fine gradations of the modeling and the arrangement of the light drapery are characteristic of the artist, as are the quiet grace of the figures and the meditative abstraction with which they disregard the beholder. The old painted frame, the mellow color of the marble itself, and the traces of pattern work in gold which at one time covered the whole relief, add additional charm to an unrestored example of Renaissance art.

58

THE YOUNG SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

By Donatello

FLORENTINE, 1386–1466

Of this beautiful relief there is a better-known version in sandstone existing in the National Museum in Florence. The Altman relief is in stucco. The relation between these two reliefs is an interesting question. The Altman stucco may be the first essay of Donatello, from which the Bargello version

57
MADONNA AND CHILD
By Antonio Rossellino

in less workable stone was afterward made. The two differ slightly in details of the features and drapery, and materially in the ornamentation of the background, the stucco being the more elaborate in its setting. In feature and expression the relief in Florence is gentler and less tense than this, which has in it something of the exaltation and solemnity with which the young Saint John must have foreseen his future as a prophet. The parted lips and the wide, fixed eyes have here scarcely the charm of the dreamy Bargello youth, but they evidence, perhaps all the more, Donatello's insight into the minds of saints and heroes, and his own august nature. The relief was formerly in the collection of Maurice Kann in Paris.

59

THE YOUNG SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

By Mino da Fiesole

FLORENTINE, 1430–1484

Almost every artist evolves a type of face which he repeats throughout his work, and it is interesting to trace between the two sculptures by Mino da Fiesole in the Altman bequest similarities in general conception and in detail, even though one is a portrait and the other an imaginative presentation of a sacred personage. Despite the fact that age is represented in the bust of a priest and youth in the head of Saint John, both faces have the same pointed oval outline, the same sensitive nose, and the same round eyes with lids overlapping at the corners. The bust of

the young Baptist was formerly the property of the Conte Rasponi Spinelli of Florence. Alert in expression, delicately modeled, it is a charming example of Florentine sculpture in the second half of the fifteenth century.

60

BUST OF A YOUNG MAN

By Hans Tilman Riemenschneider

SOUTH GERMAN, 1468?–1531

The gentle, dreamy melancholy that distinguishes this bust of a youthful, unidentified man, probably a saint, is typical of Riemenschneider's sculpture. In the work of this great master of the school of Würzburg, a feeling for ideal beauty tempers the preoccupation with dramatic expression and the forceful realism that characterize in general the Franconian school. The Altman bust, formerly in the Schreiber Collection in Esslingen, Würtemberg, is carved in wood, the material most employed by the German sculptor of the Gothic period, and retains much of the original painting with which the carving was completed.

61

JULIUS CAESAR

In the manner of Antonio Rossellino

FLORENTINE, XV CENTURY

As is said in referring to the Madonna and Child, No. 66, Rossellino, the sculptor whose influence may be seen in this bust, chose rather to depict the gentler aspects of character than the more heroic. In this

59
THE YOUNG SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
By Mino da Fiesole

imagined portrait the world's conqueror has the face of a speculative philosopher but scarcely that of a Captain of the Hosts. The fine modeling of the features and the dignity in pose of the head are characteristic of Rossellino's day and of his immediate followers. Such portrait-busts of the heroes of antiquity, as well as other sculptures with classical subjects, were much in demand during the Renaissance to satisfy the ambitions of collectors avid for Greek and Roman marbles, but unable to discover a supply of original specimens sufficient for their needs. In this bust the handling of the marble, the classical conception of the whole, and the correctness of the details of armor and ornament show how closely the sculptors of the Middle Renaissance had studied the ancient examples of Roman work, and how well they had blended the rediscovered classical tradition with the poetic feeling of their own day. At one time the piece formed part of the collection of Maurice Kann in Paris.

62 AND 63

VULCAN AND VENUS MARINA

By Tiziano Aspetti

VENETIAN, 1565–1607

The ornate decoration of this pair of monumental andirons is typical of the sumptuous bronzes of utilitarian character produced at Venice in the period of the High Renaissance, when the greatest sculptors of the time did not consider it beneath their dignity to make such objects as andirons, mortars, and inkwells.

and brought to such tasks the full measure of their genius. Alessandro Vittoria, one of the most celebrated sculptors of the Venetian school, is the author of the pair of andirons described under Nos. 64 and 65. Tiziano Aspetti, to whom is attributed the other pair of andirons in the collection, is less widely known than Alessandro, but he holds a distinguished rank among the sculptors of his time, and excelled in the production of small bronzes in a graceful and animated style.

64 AND 65

PEACE AND WAR

By Alessandro Vittoria

VENETIAN, 1525–1608

These figures of Peace and War, together with their elaborate bases, once formed part of andirons similar to the complete pair, Nos. 62 and 63, on the south wall of this room. They are finer, however, in execution, and challenge comparison with any bronze works of the period. They are by Alessandro Vittoria, the closest pupil of Sansovino. Vittoria did a large amount of architectural and decorative sculpture; among the Venetian sculptors of the closing period of the Renaissance, he is conspicuously the leader. It is not easy to differentiate the fluid style of these later masters, but the superior merit of this pair of andirons fully justifies their attribution to Vittoria himself.

The earlier taste for allegory still survived at the end of the Cinquecento, but chiefly as an excuse for

60

BUST OF A YOUNG MAN

By Hans Tilman Riemenschneider

giving names to works of art which were otherwise without very definite characterization. The vague way in which the attributes of these two symbolical figures are assembled indicates how much more interested the sculptor was in making graceful statuettes than in expressing an idea. The color of these two figures is typical of the patina and added charm which age and careful usage bring to the surface of bronze.

66 AND 67

VENUS AND NEPTUNE

By Christophe-Gabriel Allegrain

FRENCH, 1710–1795

The easy grace and flowing lines of this pair of statuettes distinguish them as works which could have been produced in no less sophisticated a period than the eighteenth century in France, although the figures have a statuesque quality reminiscent of the bronzes of the High Renaissance. They were made probably about 1740 or 1750, but reflect the stately tastes of the earlier Regency rather than the inconsequential lightness of the contemporary rococo. Allegrain was the brother-in-law of Pigalle, and highly regarded in his own day.

68

TRITON

By Adriaen de Vries

DUTCH, 1560–1603

Adriaen de Vries worked in Italy, Bohemia, and Germany. As a pupil of Gian Bologna, De Vries

adopted an Italian manner which had in it but little trace of Teutonic character. Besides numerous imposing works carried out at Prague for Rudolph II and at Vienna, he made two fountains of Hercules and Mercury, at Augsburg, wherein he followed the example of his master in using the familiar figures of allegory and classical tradition, combined with prodigal generosity and executed in a full and splendid style. The bronze Triton may be a study for one of the auxiliary figures in such a fountain.

Sixth Room

69

PORTRAIT OF A PRIEST

By Mino da Fiesole

FLORENTINE, 1430–1484

All Florentine sculptors of the fifteenth century delighted in portraiture, and Mino da Fiesole, one of the most appreciated among them, began his career by making portrait-busts, from which he passed to the larger and more monumental works for which he is famous. A considerable proportion of his important sculptures are monuments for great prelates and nobles, of which a number still exist in the churches of Florence and Rome. They generally include a portrait-bust or figure of the deceased, and it is probable that the relief of an unknown priest in the Altman Collection originally formed part of such a memorial. It was placed in a circular frame or medallion and can scarcely be fairly judged without

64

PEACE

By Alessandro Vittoria

its setting, but its strong characterization and fine modeling are obvious without the further definition of any frame. The marble was formerly in the Hainauer Collection.

70

BUST OF A MAN

Roman, first century B.C. *to first century* A.D.

Such artistic genius as the Romans possessed found its expression in realistic portraiture rather than in more imaginative works; for the Roman mind could grasp the practical facts of an existence, the poetical and fanciful aspects of which it could only partly apprehend. Much of Roman art is an echo and repetition of the more vital Greek expression, save in those instances where the Roman sculptor worked directly from the living model and concerned himself only with making an exact replica in bronze or marble of the subject set before his eyes. Further than that he could rarely go; but the extent to which he excelled in the art of portraiture is illustrated by the impressive Bust of a Man in the Altman Collection. It represents the transition period in Roman art between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D., when traces might be discerned of an idealizing tendency borrowed from Greece, a tendency which had not yet, however, perverted the native Roman realism that gives the portrait its lifelike character. The ivory with which the eyeballs are inlaid contributes greatly to this effect, especially when one imagines the bronze of the flesh in its original golden

color; and with the iris and pupil, which have disappeared, inlaid in lapis or other material, the lifelike quality must have been still further accentuated. The loss of these details and the removal of a portion of the ancient patina are the only injuries which the portrait has undergone.

71

CHARITY

By Jacopo Sansovino

FLORENTINE, 1486–1570

Illustrating within its small compass the most conspicuous merits of Venetian sculpture of the period of the High Renaissance, this beautiful group in terracotta, painted to resemble bronze, is an especially happy example of the work of the Florentine architect and sculptor Sansovino who, after 1527, settled at Venice where for the rest of his long life he held a position of leadership in the arts. Sansovino's sculpture is characterized by a genuine feeling for loveliness and elegance combined with the stately manner which the devotion to classical antiquity imposed upon the artists of his time. Even in so small a group as this Charity one is impressed with the splendid grace of the superhuman beings he strove to create. The terracotta was probably a sketch for a larger figure; a heroic group depicting the same subject, but with a different handling, still exists in the Church of S. Salvatore at Venice. Interesting to compare with the Altman terracotta is a bronze

71

CHARITY

By Jacopo Sansovino

statuette of the Virgin and Child, a work only slightly larger than the Charity, which the Museum acquired by purchase in 1910 (exhibited in Gallery C22).

72

THE VIRGIN ANNUNCIATE

By Benedetto da Maiano

FLORENTINE, 1442–1497

This terracotta is the sketch Benedetto made for the figure of the Blessed Virgin in the famous altarpiece which he executed in the church of Monte Oliveto at Naples, whither he went from Florence, about 1485, to complete an unfinished work of Antonio Rossellino's. The altarpiece is probably Benedetto's masterpiece, but whatever its obvious merits, no finished marble could have the spontaneity and directness of a model made under the impetus of a first idea, while the sculptor's inspiration was fresh and his interest unflagging. A comparison between this terracotta and the finished altarpiece shows in the latter a relaxed line and a sentimentality which in this charming version of the same figure are not apparent, since Benedetto's tendency towards oversweetness is here well restrained and his skill unmarred by any of the faults of taste into which he sometimes slipped. The terracotta still retains its original polychrome surface, which is free from repaint. It was long in the possession of the Spinelli family of Borgo San Sepolcro.

Seventh Room

73

BACCHUS AND A NYMPH, WITH CUPID

By Claude Michel, called Clodion

FRENCH, 1738–1814

In this group, as in The Intoxication of Wine, No. 74, Clodion's happy paganism is expressed with a sophistication thoroughly characteristic of the century which produced him. His knowledge of form and his especial aptitude for the depiction of children are shown in the laughing Cupid who attends the Bacchic revelers, while the firm, round limbs and delicately modeled bodies of the two chief figures of the group are as convincingly alive as any substance not flesh and blood can be. The group was formerly the property of Lord Wemyss in London.

74

THE INTOXICATION OF WINE

By Claude Michel, called Clodion

FRENCH, 1738–1814

Clodion and Houdon are today held in almost equal honor, although the former must always be remembered as an artist who did a small thing consummately well, whereas the latter's genius extended over a far larger field. The work of the one is an expression of the unrepentant sensuousness of the eighteenth century, that of the other represents the grave but by no means gloomy attitude of the philosophizing intellectuals of the epoch.

74
THE INTOXICATION OF WINE
By Claude Michel, called Clodion

No artist ever excelled Clodion in complete mastery over his medium, and in the manipulation of the terracotta in which he preferred to work he was unique. The material lends itself to a particularly lifelike texture and his dancing nymphs and satyrs are always splendidly alive and young. The group of the Bacchante and Satyr is one of Clodion's large and important works, and is signed by him "Clodion." It was formerly in the collections of Horace de Gundbourg and Jacques Doucet in Paris.

75

MERCURY TYING HIS SANDAL

By Jean Baptiste Pigalle

FRENCH, 1714–1785

Pigalle was one of the most masculine of the eighteenth-century sculptors, and in spirit belongs more to the days of Louis XIV than to the less grandiloquent time of that monarch's successor. Pigalle had great influence on the next generation of sculptors, and is considered to rank among the most eminent artists of France. This terracotta shows his strength and facility, and reveals how much nearer his sympathies were to the exuberance of baroque art than to the restrained classicism which began to appear in sculpture toward the middle of the eighteenth century. This Mercury Tying his Sandal is the first sketch for the marble of the same subject executed by Pigalle as his "diploma piece" on his reception into the Academy in 1751, and now in the Louvre.

The terracotta model the sculptor bequeathed to his son, by whom it was presented to a Registrar of the Tribunal of the Revolution, whose family retained it until 1901, when it passed into the hands of the Comte de Bryas. From this source it was obtained by Mr. Altman.

76

VENUS INSTRUCTING CUPID

By Etienne-Maurice Falconet

FRENCH, 1716–1791

Falconet was one of those sculptors of the eighteenth century who won fame by his exquisite miniature sculpture, and although his ideas were limited to a small compass and his handling without variety, he achieved within his limitations a high perfection and a lasting popularity. His little groups of Venus and the infant Cupid, of which this is a typical example, are invariably charming in fancy and graceful in design.

77

LOUISE BRONGNIART

By Jean Antoine Houdon

FRENCH, 1741–1828

Houdon's portrait-busts of children are among his most successful works, since fondness for his small sitters led him to put especial devotion into any subject in which children had a part. Many of these vivacious portraits are of members of his own large family. Of the sitter for the marble bust in the Altman

Collection, however, nothing is known save that she was very pretty, that her name is said to have been Louise Brongniart, and that her portrait is a masterly example of the sculptor's art. The bust formerly belonged to M. Mialet in Paris.

78

THE BATHER

By Jean Antoine Houdon

FRENCH, 1741–1828

Houdon, the pupil of Pigalle, and the great sculptor of the eighteenth century, has always been appreciated in this country from the time when, in the early days of the republic, he came to the United States to execute the famous portrait-statue of Washington for the Capitol at Richmond. There are now many examples of Houdon's sculpture in American collections, but none more beautiful than the Bather in the Altman Collection. The history of the statue has been fully related by M. Paul Vitry, Curator of Sculpture in the Museum of the Louvre, from whose article, published in Art in America for August, 1914, Vol. II, No. V, the following slightly abridged account is quoted:

"Among the most important works of Houdon in America, the Bather of the Altman Collection must be put in the foremost rank. Together with the celebrated Diana of the Hermitage it is one of the most important and significant works in marble of the sculptor. But, while the Diana is characteristic

of the revival of taste for the classic style and the correctness of perfect forms (a correctness which often degenerated into dryness), the Woman Bathing is in the true French eighteenth-century spirit and exhibits the essentially naturalistic tendencies of Houdon's genius. Although of the same date, it therefore offers an absolute antithesis to the Hermitage statue. Half a century ago this *Baigneuse* was thought to have been lost. Anatole de Montaiglon, in his study of Houdon, scarcely speaks of the group to which it belonged, and Délerot says distinctly that the group was destroyed during the Revolution. Fortunately this was not so. In 1828, after vicissitudes the details of which are unknown to us, the Woman Bathing was placed by Lord Hertford in the gardens of Bagatelle, his Paris home, where it remained until after the death of his heir, Sir Richard Wallace. Coming into the market some fifteen years ago, it was acquired by Mr. Altman. It bears the date 1782 and was originally the principal figure of a rather peculiar work exhibited at the Salon of 1783, and which is also found under the head of the year 1781 in the list of Houdon's works which he drew up, about 1784, before his departure for America. The artist describes it as follows: 'A naiad, life-size, in marble, seated in a basin bathing herself, and a negress, also life-size, in lead, pouring water over her mistress's shoulders. Group intended as a fountain in the garden of the Duc de Chartres at Monceaux.'

"In the last years of the old régime this well-known group of the garden of Monceaux was often described

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THE BATHER

By Jean Antoine Houdon

by the authors of guide books of Paris, among those picturesque features which the prevailing sentimental fashion for English gardens had caused to be placed in the grounds of royal and princely residences in the vicinity of Paris. The group, being placed out of doors, suffered from exposure and the negress has disappeared; however, there remain studies made for her and among them a bronzed plaster bust of a negress in the Museum of Soissons, which, if it is not the bust of a negro woman 'imitating antique bronze' of the Salon of 1781, may be a replica of it of a slightly later period. When the marble figure was placed in the grounds of Bagatelle, it again was exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, to which it owes its present patina and the careful restorations which it has undergone. The leg which had been repaired in 1793 had again to be restored, and the foot now rests upon a fragment of rock which has been added to the base.

"Notwithstanding these repairs, and the slightly peculiar pose which the picturesque composition of the group must have made appropriate, this statue is a most valuable and fascinating work because of the easy grace and beauty of the movement, and of the subtlety of the modeling. The head, which is less regular than that of the Diana, recalls somewhat the naturalistic figures of Allegrain, and is assuredly, like them, studied directly from the living model."

Tapestries

Fourth and Seventh Rooms

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TAPESTRY, ADORATION OF THE MAGI

Flemish, early sixteenth century

Tapestries

Fourth and Seventh Rooms

Fourth Room

IN ROOM 4 hang three tapestries of great excellence. The largest, No. 79—the earliest of the three—is a late Gothic example, made in Brussels about the year 1500, finely woven with silver-gilt threads among the silk and wool of which the fabric is composed. The tapestry, like, some others of its period, is divided by architectural partitions into smaller fields which contain scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin. In the lower left-hand division the Annunciation is depicted, and above it the Presentation of the Virgin; in the lower right-hand corner is the Adoration of the Magi, surmounted by the Visitation; while in the upper center is the Assumption of the Virgin with a landscape below and a choir of angels above. The tapestry is a superb example of the golden age of the craft, typical in design, color, and technique of the finest productions of the Flemish looms. The piece was at one time in the Spitzer Collection and later in the Hainauer.

The second tapestry in this room, No. 80, is a few

years later, dating probably from the decade between 1525 and 1535. It represents the Adoration of the Magi, and was probably designed by Bernard van Orley, a Flemish painter who was born in 1493 and died in 1542. The painting of the Virgin and Child with Angels, No. 34, Room 3, included in the Altman bequest, is another work of this artist, whose characteristic method of drawing is as evident in the tapestry as in the finished picture. Van Orley made several cartoons for the Brussels looms, then at their height. Executed by the most skilful craftsmen of the time, these tapestries, lavishly enriched with gold and silver threads, are triumphs of the weaver's art.

The third tapestry, No. 81, is also an exceptional specimen. The subject is the young Christ, for some unknown reason represented without a halo, crushing the eucharistic grapes into the cup of sacrifice, while the orb of His sovereignty rests on the table before Him. Framing the composition is a Latin inscription from the Vulgate (Ecclesiasticus, chapter L) which reads in translation: "He stretched out His hand in sacrifice and poured forth of the blood of the grape." The tapestry is Flemish, dating from about the same time, at the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, as the large hanging, No. 79, which represents scenes from the Life of the Virgin. The small piece, which is heavily interwoven with metal threads, is the finest in texture of all the tapestries in the collection. There are analogous tapestries of this subject in the Martin Le Roy Collec-

81

TAPESTRY, INFANT CHRIST, SYMBOLIZING HIS SACRIFICE

Flemish, end of fifteenth century

tion, Paris, and in the Ryerson Collection, Chicago (formerly in the Spitzer Collection).

Seventh Room

A fourth tapestry, No. 82, in Room 7, is of another age and of another manner, when the reproduction on the looms of pictorial models had superseded the earlier and more purely decorative tradition. The Altman tapestry is woven from a cartoon by François Boucher (1703-1770), whose numerous paintings of tender pastorals and pretty classical allegories record the taste of French society in the mid-eighteenth century. As a tapestry designer Boucher was unrivaled in popularity. For the royal manufactory of the Gobelins he made cartoons for six sets of tapestries, among them a series showing the Loves of the Gods, which included a single hanging of Vertumnus and Pomona, the subject of the Altman tapestry. This was first used at the manufactory in 1747 at the King's order but in 1752 the Beauvais tapestry looms, which rivaled the Gobelins and were also supported by the government, received another and different cartoon of the same subject, which they carried out five times in all. The Altman example is signed and dated 1757 and may probably be identified with a piece recorded as having been made at Beauvais for a M. de Cuissey, to whom it was delivered in 1758. The subject is taken from Ovid's Metamorphoses, XIV, 623 et seq., and refers to a visit paid to Pomona by Vertumnus, who, in order to penetrate past the barriers surrounding his beloved, disguised himself

in the rags of an old woman and gained admission as a fortune teller. Two large tapestries of the set of the Loves of the Gods, woven at Beauvais in 1754 from Boucher's designs, are exhibited in one of the lace galleries (H18).

Furniture

Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Rooms

99
CABINET
French Renaissance

102

CABINET

French Renaissance

Furniture

Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Rooms

THIRTY-NINE pieces of furniture are included in the Altman bequest. With the exception of three Italian chairs, Nos. 100, 101, and 103, in Room 4, all the earlier specimens are French in origin and highly typical of the last phase of the French Renaissance. The three cabinets in Room 4, Nos. 99, 102, and 104, and three tables, Nos. 105 and 107, in Room 4, and No. 106, in Room 6, form a remarkable group of furniture of this type, which combines a plethora of familiar decorative themes derived from Italian sources with a northern crispness and opulence of execution. Such furniture, where sphinxes, griffins, terminal and grotesque figures, carved in bold relief or in the full round, play the leading part in the ornamentation, is thought to have been made by the "Burgundian" school of French carvers, principally at Dijon, where the fountain head of the style was Hugues Sambin, a designer and architect who published a book of engravings illustrative of furniture in the year 1572, thereby giving his name to the fashion in furniture which grew out of his designs. The table, No. 107,

is a particularly fine example of the school, although the top is a modern restoration; and the cabinet, No. 102, is unusual in having painted ornament in addition to that carved in low, middle, and high relief. These pieces of furniture are typical of the sumptuous tastes of the French court under Catherine de' Medici and her sons.

Around the walls of Room 6 are placed twelve English chairs of the late seventeenth century. The finely carved pair, Nos. 113 and 114, date from early in the reign of William and Mary, who ruled England from 1688 to 1702, while the six chairs, Nos. 115–120, are a few years later, although probably made under the same sovereigns. With their cane backs and upholstered seats and the sharply foliated carving of their walnut frames, these chairs show the transmutation which the contemporary fashions of the French court under Louis the Fourteenth had undergone in their passage across the Channel by way of the Netherlands. The carving on the set of six is similar to the ornament which Grinling Gibbons and his school were carrying out with dazzling success on a larger scale in mansions over the whole of England.

In Room 7 are three chairs, Nos. 109, 110, 111, of the last half of the seventeenth century. They are representative examples of sumptuous French furniture in the Louis Fourteenth style. Their dignified lines, gilded frames, and especially the pattern of the finely woven tapestry with which they are covered are in the manner of Berain, court designer to the Grand Monarque and indissolubly connected with the artis-

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TABLE

French Renaissance

CHAIR, ENGLISH

Late seventeenth century

tic phases of the reign. These tapestry backs and seats, together with the covering of the sofa, No. 112, were made at the royal manufactory at Beauvais, about 1680. The cipher monogram woven into the chair-backs is "P. C.," repeated and reversed, a circumstance which supports the statement that this upholstery was formerly the property of that Prince de Condé and Duc de Bourbon who built Chantilly and left behind him one of the most illustrious names in French history. The sofa shows a design of apes playing with the colored wools and spindles used in the weaving of tapestry, such creatures being popular with designers of the day who were fond of creating *singeries* of many sorts. In the center of the seat is a monogram of the interlaced L, the cipher of Louis the Fourteenth, surmounted by the crown, an evidence that this tapestry was woven for one of the royal palaces.

The table, No. 108, in this room is some thirty years later than the chairs and is typical of the style and taste of the Regency, when the use of gilded bronze or ormolu mounts applied to wood was a favorite decorative method.

Rugs

Sixth Room

Rugs

Sixth Room

RUG weaving is one of the oldest arts of the Orient. The rugs of Babylonia and Persia were celebrated in antiquity because of their beautiful and elaborate patterns. But the productions of these early looms have long since perished, and only literary records and representations on monuments tell us of their beauty. The earliest existing fragments of knotted rugs are Turkish in origin, and were found in the mosque Ala-ed-din in Konia, in Asia Minor; they are assigned to the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The Seljuk Turks who settled in Asia Minor were originally nomads who came from Central Asia, where perhaps the first knotted rugs were produced. From the fourteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century the manufacture of rugs and carpets steadily progressed through all the countries of the Mohammedan world. The sixteenth century marks the zenith of Persian rug weaving.

From the more primitive periods until the decline of the art the Persian weaves took first rank in beauty of color and design, but during the last century before the decadence set in, the factories founded in India

under the Mogul sovereigns produced rugs which have never been approached for their almost incredible fineness of texture. With an innate genius for design the Persians subordinated every motive in their rugs to the general decorative effect, whereas the Indian weavers sought for a greater fidelity to the natural objects they generally chose to represent. A Persian rug, although it may show, as in the famous hunting carpets, an imaginative assemblage of men and beasts mingled with decorative motives derived from nature or Chinese art, is always conventional in representation. The opposite is typical of Indian productions in which ordered collections of realistically drawn plant or animal studies worthy of a herbal or bestiary are of frequent occurrence. The influence of the courts is strongly evident in the finest rugs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which, both in India and Persia, were mostly woven in imperial factories for royal use.

In the choice of his rugs, as with other classes of material, the founder of the Altman Collection showed his preference for work of culminative epochs rather than of primitive, and his fastidious insistence on perfection of technique. With one early exception, the sixteen rugs hung in Room 6 date from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and include examples of carpet-weaving as perfect as exist in any museum. The individual rugs are noted in order and are grouped as far as possible according to period and place of manufacture.

On the north wall of Room 6 is the earliest rug,

86

RUG

Central Persian, about 1580

88

SILK ANIMAL RUG

Central Persian, second half of sixteenth century

No. 83. It was made in North Persia at the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, and displays the conventions in design and the restricted color of the more archaic carpets. No. 84, the rug on the west wall of Room 6, is of the type known as Polonaise or Polish because it was formerly thought to have been made in Poland. It is now established, however, that such rugs were woven in the imperial Persian manufactories in the first half of the seventeenth century and were intended largely as gifts to European sovereigns from the reigning Shah. The colors of these carpets are delicate and jewel-like; gold and silver threads woven into the background increases the brilliancy of the fabric.

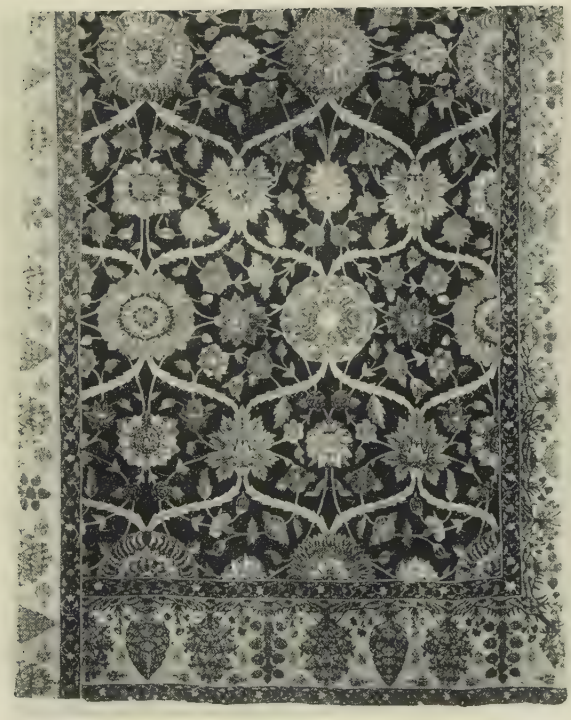
The three rugs, Nos. 85, 86, and 88, are all Central Persian, probably woven at Kashan, and may be assigned to the second half of the sixteenth century. They are of silk very minutely woven and represent in technique the acme of Persian rug-making. In one square inch of each of the three there are between five and seven hundred hand-tied knots, and the result is a texture as fine and soft as velvet. No. 85 was formerly in the J. E. Taylor Collection in London; No. 86 is notable for the Chinese symbols occurring in the design; No. 88 is a fine example of the animal carpets, so called from the beasts which figure in the pattern.

With the fragment of a carpet, No. 87, begins the series of Indian rugs, which includes Nos. 87, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94, and 96. Some of these rugs are even

finer in weave than the Persian and average from seven hundred to twelve hundred knots to the square inch, while the small fragment, No. 94, placed on the table under the tablet to Mr. Altman, contains the almost incredible number of 2,552 knots in one square inch of its surface. The strong colors and naturalistic flowers of these Indian carpets are characteristic of the Indian weaves. No. 87 is purely Indian in design; on the other hand, No. 92, like the famous carpet made at Lahore in 1634 for the Girdlers' Company in London, is the Indian version of the Ispahan, or Herat, type of Persian rug mentioned below. Most of these Indian rugs were probably made at Lahore, the seat of the imperial looms during the reigns of Akbar (1556–1605) and his successors, Jahangir (1605–1627) and Jahan (1628–1658), sovereigns who brought the art of rug-making in India to its highest development. Under their rule, besides Lahore, the cities of Agra and Fathipur supported other thriving manufactories of rugs to which the coarser weaves are usually attributed.

Rug No. 93 is Persian, of about 1580, and is an interesting and unusually early example of the prayer rugs patterned after the niches set in the eastern wall of Mohammedan mosques. In the niche hangs the lamp familiar in such mosques, while the borders are composed of religious inscriptions of prayer and praise from the Koran.

On the north wall is No. 95, a large Persian carpet dating from the first half of the seventeenth century with a repeating design of conventionalized tree



89

PART OF RUG, FLOWER AND TRELLIS DESIGN

Indian, about 1580

93

PRAYER RUG WITH INSCRIPTION FROM THE KORAN

North Persian, about 1580

motives and palmettes. No. 96, on the south wall, is Indian, of a slightly later date. The two remaining rugs, Nos. 97 and 98, belong to the well-known variety, incorrectly called Ispahan, which were woven at Herat in the seventeenth century.

Japanese Lacquer, Sword-Guards and Knife-Handles

Sixth Room

Japanese Lacquer, Sword-Guards and Knife-Handles

Sixth Room

JAPANESE lacquer is a form of art which at the present moment is, perhaps, not held in such general favor as twenty years ago, but even the most uninterested observer cannot fail to be impressed by the high quality and impeccable workmanship of the specimens shown in CASES A and B of ROOM 6. These examples of enamel on wood date from the later phase of the craft in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and a number of the Altman pieces are signed by the best-known lacquerers of the time, who were distinguished by super-excellent skill in the use of materials. Among the pieces of aventurine or gold-flaked lacquer the most noteworthy are the long gift-box, No. 46, CASE A, ornamented with Daimio crests and formerly the property of a member of the Tachibana clan; the rare *O-bento-bako* or lunch basket, No. 47, in the same case; and the pair of incense-holders in the forms of male and female mandarin ducks, No. 48, CASE B, symbols of conjugal happiness. Many of the smaller boxes were made for the comfits used in *Cha-no-yu*, or cere-

monial tea. The black mirror case, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, No. 49, CASE A, is a decorative and early piece following the Chinese mode of ornament, while the fine inro or medicine-case made to hang at the belt, No. 50, CASE A, typifies the more boldly patterned lacquer of the Tokugawa period at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The oval box, No. 51, CASE A, is in the style of the Liu-kiu Islands to the south of Japan.

In CASE A are three iron and bronze sword-guards of good quality, Nos. 52 and 53 having a background of *nanako* or "fish-roe" and dating from the early nineteenth century, while No. 54 is about forty years older and was made for a sword belonging to some member of the Daté family of Sendai. The metal knife-handles in this case are works of the same time and the same craft which produced the three sword-guards. Most of these small objects were made for and preserved as delicate examples of the armorer's art, more suitable for the collector's cabinet than for hard usage. Such handles were changed from time to time on the same blade, amateurs keeping a large reserve store of them for various occasions. The combination of finely wrought gold or silver ornament on a rugged iron ground, found not only in sword-guards but in much other metalwork of the period, was a contrast of which Japanese art in the eighteenth century was especially fond.

Miscellaneous Objects

Fourth and Sixth Rooms

Miscellaneous Objects

Fourth and Sixth Rooms

THE Altman Collection includes a number of objects of varying character not already referred to. With the exception of three large plates in Room 4, these are exhibited in Room 6.

The two plates, Nos. 121 and 122, Room 4, are Hispano-Moresque, No. 121 dating from the second half of the fifteenth century, No. 122 from the sixteenth century. The third plate in this room, No. 123, is a sixteenth-century Urbino piece painted with a figure of Justice and grotesques.

On the south wall of Room 6, plate No. 124, is Kutahia pottery of the early sixteenth century. On the opposite side of the room plate No. 125 is Damascus pottery, sixteenth century, and No. 126 is Persian of the seventeenth century, and was made at Koubatcha in the Caucasus (Daghestan).

The globe, No. 127, is Syrian, Damascus pottery of the sixteenth century. A globe of this type was used as an ornament on the cluster of cords whereby such a lamp as No. 128 was suspended in the mosque. The lamp is of that variety of pottery often incorrectly called Rhodian, but in reality made in the Turkish manufactories of Asia Minor.

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